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ABSTRACT

The PARTNERS program is designed to assist educators in a problem-solving process and in making appropriate intervention decisions for students with learning and behavior problems. Through presentation, reading, discussion, and activities, participants have an opportunity to learn about and use an effective educational problem solving, decisionmaking model. They are also expected to work with a colleague and practice collaboration as well as implement interventions between workshop sessions. The guide begins with an introduction, a problem solving process graphic, a description of the problem solving process and of educators as collaborators in problem solving, a brainstorming activity, and guidelines for brainstorming and group voting. Following this overview, the guide is organized into five sections: (1) Classroom Teaching and Review; (2) Problem Identification and Clarification; (3) Intervention and Evaluation Planning; (4) Implementation; and (5) Evaluation and Follow-up. Each of these sections includes explanations, discussion questions, and guided practice activities. Appendices include: The PARTNERS in Problem Solving Process Graphic; Guidelines for Brainstorming and Group Voting; Check List for Mismatch Statements; List of Contributing Factors; Intervention Plan; PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures; Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) Referral, Evaluation and Placement Process; Glossary; and Annotated List of Resource Materials. (LL)

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Partners in Problem-Solving

A Collaborative Process for Resolving Student
Learning and Behavior Problems

A staff development program for educators

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PARTNERS in Problem Solving Staff Development Program

Participant Guide



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Overview

Reading

Introduction

The PARTNERS in Problem Solving Staff Development Program is designed to assist educators in a problem-solving process and in making appropriate intervention decisions for students with learning and behavior problems. Learning by doing is the premise of this program. The PARTNERS program uses a case study approach to improve teacher screening, decision making, consultation, and intervention planning for students with learning and behavior problems.

Through presentation, reading, discussion, and activities, the participants will have the opportunity to learn about and use an effective educational decision-making model. Simulation cases are used during the workshop. Participants also will practice and receive feedback on their developing skills, with actual cases taken from their school or classroom. They will need time to work with a colleague and practice collaboration and to implement interventions between workshop sessions.

As a result of participating in this program, educators will

- develop a problem-solving orientation to designing and evaluating interventions for students with learning and behavior problems.
- improve the ability to define and describe student learning and behavior problems.
- improve the ability to ask important questions regarding student learning and behavior.
- improve the ability to analyze information regarding students' strengths and weaknesses, and to develop insight into interventions that may work for a student.
- improve the ability to develop interventions aimed at resolving identified problems.
- improve the ability to evaluate the progress of interventions that are implemented.
- be better able to determine when to access other resources, such as alcohol and other drug abuse, at-risk, EEN, counseling, and Chapter I.
- develop an increased understanding of the benefits that appropriate screening and problem-solving practices have for the total educational program.

The PARTNERS program is based on a problem-solving model used in many other disciplines such as, business and technology. Specifically, the process used in PARTNERS was adapted from the Department of Public Instruction program Decisions: A Process for Screening Educational Problems in the Classroom, which has been field tested in numerous Wisconsin school districts.

The PARTNERS program process is based upon the concept that student learning and behavior challenges are best examined and solved by educators working together to identify and clarify concerns, "matches," and "mismatches;" and to plan, implement, and evaluate interventions. The process will help participants make decisions about what to do for students exhibiting learning and behavior problems. Utilizing the problem-solving process, participants will detect and describe mismatches between expectations and student performance and behavior. "Mismatches" will be clarified by asking questions and analyzing contributing factors. Finally, intervention plans aimed at resolving the mismatches will be developed.

While participating in the workshop session, participants will be expected to participate in reading, discussion, and activities in the program and practice problem solving and intervention planning with a PARTNER outside of class.

Characteristics of PARTNERS in Problem Solving

The process for educational problem solving proposed by the PARTNERS program:

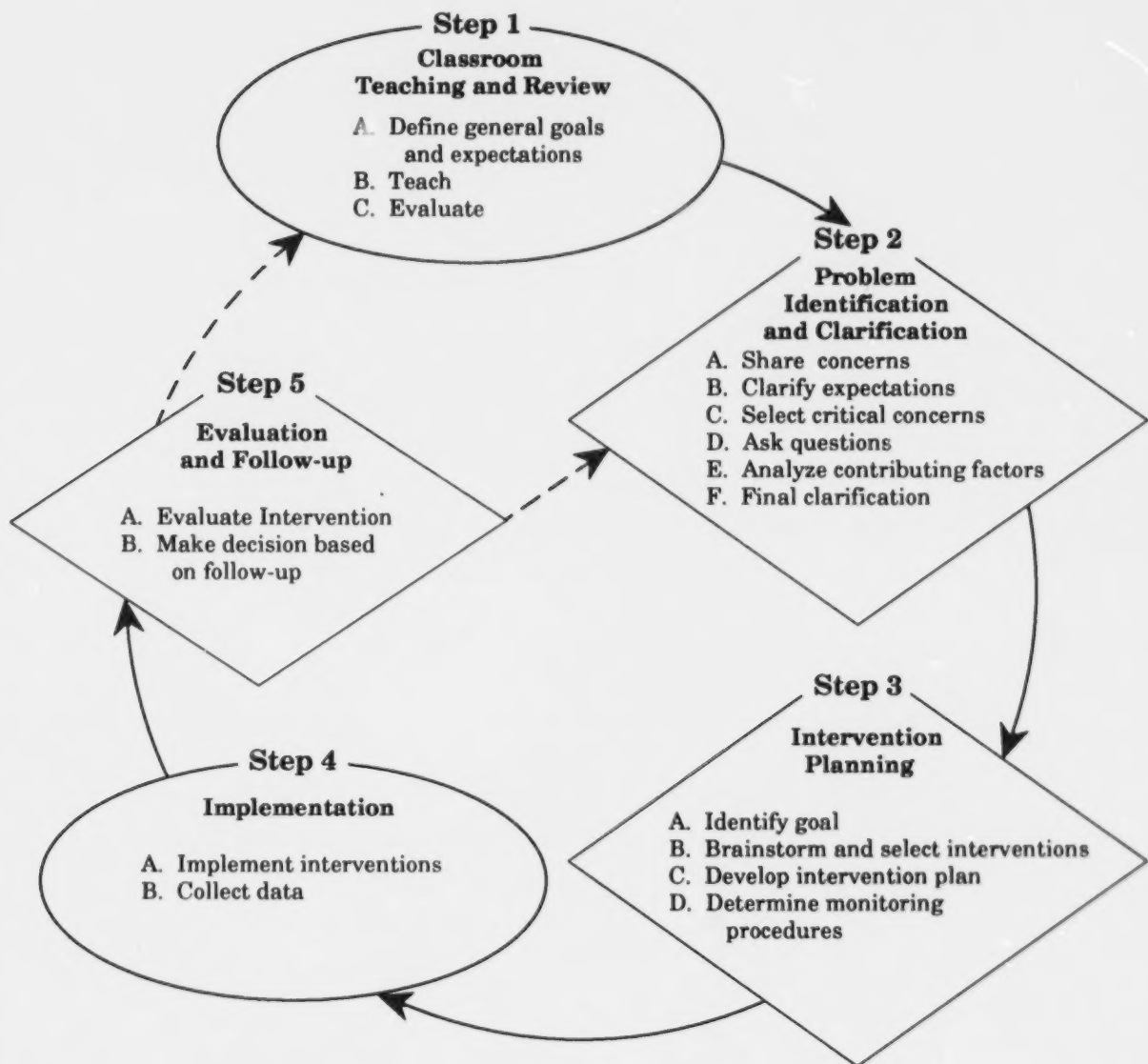
- encourages a systematic, disciplined inquiry;
- discourages the use of the less effective, often inaccurate instincts;
- formalizes, systematizes, and describes practices, procedures, and guidelines classroom teachers should use in analyzing students' learning and behavior concerns;
- assures that screening decisions and instructional interventions used in the classrooms are the most appropriate, practical, and effective means of addressing the identified problems;
- focuses on data collection and examining alternatives;
- reduces hidden assumptions and interpretations; and
- takes full advantage of an educator's powers as an investigator and agent of change.

It is this program's premise that students' learning and behavior problems need to be dealt with collectively, by a team of educators who work with these students. Yet, it has been noted that educators are not trained to be problem solvers. The developers of the PARTNERS program acknowledge that the current context of educational institutions as well as traditional teacher training and staff development generally do not encourage educators to become collaborative problem solvers. The isolated work conditions of teachers limit the amount of interaction they have with their colleagues, thus making participation in collegial problem solving difficult. Even when these feelings of isolation are removed, time to meet with other educators and to implement interventions is limited. Expectations and standards placed upon educators by local, state, and federal agencies may make it difficult to deal with diverse student populations. Cultural norms and traditions of behavior in schools and communities also may place barriers on educators maintaining a problem-solving orientation guided by the belief that teachers are responsible for all students. Finally, educators' own assumptions about dealing with students with diverse needs vary widely.

The developers of the PARTNERS program believe that such assumptions, attitudes, and traditions need to be examined as this problem-solving and decision-making model is implemented. Each school that participates in the PARTNERS program will need to examine its own philosophy and actions with regard to problem solving for students with learning and behavior problems. Each school will need to identify how it may best overcome systemwide or internal constraints in order to successfully implement the systematic problem-solving process.

This is an exciting time in education. The challenges of the twenty-first century lie before us. At no other time in this country's history has education taken on such an important role in terms of the future. Our training as professional educators puts us in a valuable and critical position to enable our students to reach their full potential. Alone, the task is insurmountable, but together as PARTNERS in problem solving, we can find ways to creatively and effectively deal with students who present unique challenges.

PARTNERS in Problem Solving Process



Occurs outside of PARTNERS meetings



Occurs during PARTNERS meetings



Decision points following Evaluation of Intervention

The PARTNERS in Problem Solving Process

This section provides an overview of the entire PARTNERS process. Some of the terms used, such as match and mismatch, may be new to you. All of the major concepts introduced will be defined more clearly as you participate in this program.

The PARTNERS program utilizes a systematic problem-solving process in which educators jointly define student concerns, explore contributing and other factors that influence student learning and behavior problems, and identify educational intervention strategies to alleviate identified concerns. The process consists of the following steps.

1. Classroom Teaching and Review

Prior to initiating the team portion of the PARTNERS process, teachers individually screen students. Thus, classroom teaching and review is a prerequisite to the PARTNERS process.

Teachers continuously review student performance and behavior as they teach. They make judgments about student competency by comparing students with peers or against set criteria over time and across tasks. They also compare student performance and behavior to the expectations held in that setting. Based on feedback, teachers modify their teaching techniques, activities, and expectations. Classroom Teaching and Review consists of all these teaching behaviors.

During Classroom Teaching and Review, teachers primarily perform three functions. First, they **define general curricular and behavioral goals and expectations**. Teachers explicitly identify what students, in general, are expected to do to be considered successful. Then criteria for success are determined. Teachers determine if performance matches will be identified with grades, standardized measures, informal measures such as review of class work, observation, and so forth. Teachers also determine teaching activities and methods that will be used to facilitate meeting goals and expectations.

Next, educators **teach**. Instruction, educational activities, and discipline systems are implemented.

Teachers then **evaluate**. They observe student performance and behavior, compare performance to expectations, and identify areas that match and mismatch. Tentative concerns about students whose performance does not match expectations are then developed. Often, teachers independently adjust curriculum and teaching behavior at this point to alleviate mismatches. Occasionally, these normal adjustments are not enough and teachers may choose to initiate a referral or the PARTNERS problem-solving process.

Upon initiating the PARTNERS process, the educator enters the first phase of collaborative decision making—Problem Identification and Clarification.



2. Problem Identification and Clarification

Teachers should bring all information they have gathered during classroom teaching and review. With their PARTNERS, they begin to identify and describe their concerns. Problem Identification and Clarification is the most important step of the PARTNERS process.

The first part of this step is problem identification. A teacher comes to the initial PARTNERS meeting with a concern ("red flag") regarding a student or small group of students. The teacher **shares the concern**. The concern(s) are identified by asking, "How is the student failing to meet the general classroom goals and expectations?" Concerns may fall into various categories such as learning, behavior, emotional, and medical.

Together, the PARTNERS then **clarify expectations**. This is somewhat different than determining expectations prior to initial teaching because it is student specific rather than group oriented. The educators discuss and identify what this particular student would need to do to be considered successful. These expectations may reflect modified or alternative goals for the student.

The PARTNERS **select one (or two) critical concern(s)** to work on first. The target concern should be one that holds promise for being resolved in the educational context.

Prior to going on, it is necessary to pinpoint specific expectations that are (matches) or are not (mismatches) being met related to the concern. For example, if the concern is, "The student does not complete homework," a mismatch might be: "The student fails to turn in homework two of five seventh-hour English classes." An example of a match might be: "The student consistently turns in math homework." At this time, it is not necessary to delve into the reasons why the matches and mismatches are occurring—it is most important now to define concerns as mismatches. A mismatch statement should be somewhat broadly defined, but specific enough to be observable and measurable (something concrete for which the teacher(s) can do something about in the educational context).

The other part of this step is problem clarification. PARTNERS begin by **asking questions** regarding the mismatch(es). Possible student variables (learning style, skill or behavior strengths and weaknesses, attitudes), classroom variables (physical environment, peers, materials, grading procedures), and teacher variables (expectations, techniques used, teaching style, attitudes) that might be affecting the mismatch should be explored. The primary purpose of asking questions is to make sure all possible contributing factors are considered.

Next, the PARTNERS try to answer the questions. It may be necessary to gather additional information to answer some of the questions. In order to identify if additional information is needed, it may be helpful for the educators to make two lists: one for things known about the mismatch, and one for unknown or unanswered questions about the concern. Such additional information may include whatever is needed to determine the extent of the problem, why it might be occurring, and possible successful intervention strategies.

The PARTNERS should identify a means to answer the unanswered questions and then take action to do so. During this step, the participants may choose to review the

student's file; complete check lists; do some informal assessment; interview the student, teachers, and parents; or observe the student in class. At times, a brief recess for a few days may be needed to collect information before resuming the PARTNERS process.

When the PARTNERS feel they have enough information, they are ready to **analyze contributing factors** affecting the mismatch(es). Student strengths, weaknesses, and needs, as well as relevant teacher and classroom variables related to the mismatch(es), are discussed. Some examples might include learning style, skill levels, social and emotional issues, behavior baselines, and special interests and abilities.

The final step in Problem Identification and Clarification is to **further clarify the mismatch(es) and expectations** as needed. Following the discussion of contributing factors and student strengths and weaknesses, the teacher may feel that the mismatch(es) and expectations need to be altered.

Once the target mismatch(es) is analyzed and clarified, intervention planning may occur.



3. Intervention Planning

Usually by this point intervention ideas flow freely and logically. An intervention **goal** (expectation) should be **identified**. This generally involves reversing the mismatch statement to a match statement. For example, "The student will turn in homework on a daily basis in the seventh-hour English class." The PARTNERS team then **brainstorms possible interventions** to address the concern and meet the goal. Ideas are noted on the Intervention Plan. After all possible ideas have been exhausted, the educators **select the intervention(s)** they believe should be tried. Interventions may include those to be implemented in the classroom, support services from Chapter I, counseling, EEN services, or collaborative interventions between two or more classroom teachers. It is critical that the teacher(s) who will be implementing the intervention (usually the teacher of the student in question) always has the final say in selecting the intervention to implement as well as the procedures used to implement it.

Next, the PARTNERS should **develop an intervention plan**. This plan should specify

- the goal to address the clarified concern
- a description of the best course of action to pursue
 - what will happen (for example: activities, teaching procedures, environmental changes)
 - who will implement interventions
 - where interventions will be implemented
 - how intervention plan data will be shared with other concerned parties, including the parents and student if applicable

The PARTNERS team then must **decide how the intervention(s) will be monitored and evaluated**. This is a critical portion in the PARTNERS process. The team should decide what student criteria will be used to demonstrate achievement of goals (what observable learning and behavior expectations will be monitored). Timelines for ongoing monitoring and an overall review of the plan's effectiveness should be set. (This information also should be noted on the Intervention Plan.)

4. Implementation

Following the development of the Intervention Plan, **instructional, behavioral, and other interventions** should be implemented. **Data should be collected** on student performance and behavior in order to provide feedback regarding the success of the intervention plan.

5. Evaluation and Follow-up

Following implementation and monitoring according to the intervention plan, the PARTNERS should reconvene to **evaluate** the effectiveness of the **intervention** (is there a match or mismatch between teacher expectations and student performance and behavior).

Follow-up of any intervention plan developed by the PARTNERS is a critical decision point. It is during the follow-up that PARTNERS determine the success of the intervention.

If the original concern has been resolved, the **student returns to Classroom Teaching and Review** (Step 1). Often modifications identified in the intervention plan will need to continue. The process may be repeated with another target concern addressed.

If a concern still exists, the PARTNERS need to decide if the intervention plan simply needs more time or needs **modification**. First of all, the group needs to return to Problem Identification and Clarification (Step 2D). Information gained while implementing the intervention should be considered together with the information discussed during the initial PARTNERS meeting. New contributing factors and student responses should be discussed and it should be determined if the concern selected is still appropriate and critical. Next, the attempted intervention should be analyzed. Have parts of the plan worked? What has not worked? Have all possible resources been tapped? Is some other regular education program or curriculum change indicated? A new or modified intervention plan may be developed and implemented and the process is repeated.

If it is finally concluded that the problem can not be resolved within the PARTNERS context, then the educators must ask, "Is there reason to believe that a handicapping condition may exist?" If so, an Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) referral is indicated. If not, a non-EEN referral such as at-risk referral might be indicated. It is important to note that making an **EEN or non-EEN referral** does not preclude continuing the PARTNERS process. Continue repeating the process through Steps 2 and 3.

The PARTNERS process also is extremely useful for students already receiving EEN or non-EEN services (for example, Chapter I). For these students, the PARTNERS process provides specific interventions to assist functioning in the mainstream and integrating modifications taught in resource classes into regular classes.

Implementation of the Process

Implementation practices of this process in several school districts have indicated that the entire process usually takes three meetings of approximately 30 minutes each. During the first meeting expectations, concerns, and areas for further exploration are identified. During the next meeting data is shared and intervention plans are developed. The final meeting is reserved for evaluating the implementation of the intervention plan and recycling the process as needed. Teachers who have used the process have reported that it is time well spent. Interventions generated have been found to often help other students in addition to the student originally targeted for intervention.

For Further Thought

1. How does the PARTNERS process compare to intervention planning currently in use at your school?

a. What are some similarities?

b. What are some differences?

2. What portions of the process do you think will be the most difficult to carry out?

a. Why?

b. What do you think could be done to facilitate carrying out the process?

Reading

Educators as Collaborators in Problem Solving

The most critical decision in the referral-to-placement process is the decision to refer. On a national level, approximately 75 percent of the students referred for special education evaluations are eventually placed in programs for students with exceptional education needs (EEN). Unfortunately, exceptional education is not always the best nor most appropriate solution, particularly for students with mild learning and behavioral problems. EEN programming should be a last option — reserved for those students with the most serious problems. It has been noted that many educational difficulties can be dealt with more effectively when teachers who have concerns about students have the opportunity to enlist their colleagues' support and knowledge in a collaborative problem-solving effort. Even when students are identified and provided with a special education program, they usually spend much time in the regular classroom. While the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Multidisciplinary-team (M-team) processes outline the exceptional education needs of students, collegial support for the classroom teacher continues to be crucial.

Educators involved in collaborative problem solving may include teachers or school support staff members. Sometimes a school institutes a formal team to engage in collaborative problem solving. These formal groups often are referred to as teaching assistance teams (TATs), teacher consultation teams, or pupil assistance teams. These formal TATs often have fixed members with the exception of the teacher who brings the concern to the group. James Chalfant and Margaret Van Dusen Psyh recommend that few special educators, if any, should be involved in TATs. While they have their advantages, TATs run the risk of turning into regular education M-teams or mechanistic "machines" for information processing and advice giving. Less formal groups of two or more educators are equally effective. In this less formal situation, the teacher who has the concern about the student asks one or more colleagues to engage in the problem-solving process depending upon who the teacher believes should be best able to help. The common element among any collaborative problem-solving group is that the educators involved follow a problem-solving process that is student centered, such as the PARTNERS process.

The basic premise of collaborative problem solving is that all educators in a school share responsibility for successfully educating every student in that school. The classroom teacher experiencing a problem with a student need not feel responsible for solving the problem alone. That teacher's experience, knowledge, and skills, along with those of the assisting colleague(s), should be used to deal with more challenging educational concerns, whether academic, behavioral, or social-emotional. As a group, school staff members review the problem, discuss student strengths and weaknesses, determine intervention ideas, and provide support and follow-up as interventions are implemented.

By assisting with more immediate interventions for a perceived problem, a group of educators also can fulfill a screening function. Teachers who are uncertain about whether to refer a student for exceptional education have other educators with whom they can discuss this issue.

It is important to note that the collaborative process can not be used to delay EEN referrals nor to deny services to students who need them. In other words, a problem-solving group is not a referral review committee. Instead, it functions in the realm of regular education, focusing on clarifying student-related concerns and developing teaching and behavior management strategies to be implemented in the classroom. All teachers should be encouraged to engage in problem solving with their colleagues, but can not be required to do so prior to initiating an EEN referral.

Having peers who can collaboratively engage in student-centered problem solving offers many advantages in addition to quick intervention and screening. The collaborative process increases attention to individualized instruction, improves staff communication, reduces inappropriate EEN referrals, and assists in supporting mainstreamed students with EEN. Most importantly it encourages teachers to share competencies and ideas.

Staff commitment, skill, and belief in the process are essential to effective collaborative problem solving regardless of whether or not a formal or informal group of educators is involved. Some risk taking is entailed, so the situation must be made as nonthreatening as possible. The school staff, in particular those involved in the immediate problem-solving situation, should view themselves as a team. They should recognize that they will need each other's help and must not belittle each other for seeking assistance. After all, the primary purpose of such groups is to provide a forum where colleagues can work through student-related difficulties in a supportive and creative manner.

Reference

Chalfant, James C., and Margaret Van Dusen Psych. "Implementing Teacher Assistance Teams in Your School District." *Counterpoint*, Nov. 1981, pp. 21-24.

For Further Thought

1. What can be gained from a collaborative problem-solving approach?
2. What contributions are necessary to implement a collaborative problem-solving model?
3. What are the constraints or barriers to implementing collaborative problem solving?

Activity

Brainstorming Activity

Educators as Collaborators in Problem Solving

Many teachers welcome comments from their colleagues about improving their teaching practices, strategies, and techniques. Some teachers, however, find such comments and suggestions somewhat intrusive.

- How do you feel about getting advice?
- How would you feel about being involved in a collegial problem-solving process.
- How open are you to it?
- If it is a problem, what could happen to make you feel more comfortable?

If you were asked by a colleague to give some assistance, what would be your way of engaging in collaborative problem solving in a nonthreatening (supportive) way? By utilizing the guidelines on the following page, brainstorm a list of behaviors that would promote a collaborative atmosphere. What would you say and do to help your PARTNERS feel accepted, respected, listened to, and willing to share?

Brainstorming and Group Voting

Throughout the workshop, and particularly in the early stages of planning to resolve a problem, group brainstorming and voting will help you arrive at decisions quickly and fairly. Begin by choosing a group recorder to write down everything that is said and, later, to tally the points each alternative (idea) receives during voting. Here are several suggestions that will make these brainstorming and group-voting sessions more effective.

Resource

Guidelines for Brainstorming and Group Voting

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way of bringing out each person's creative ideas quickly and effectively. Here are several suggestions for making brainstorming effective.

- Go around the group in a circle, each person giving one idea.
- Repeat until all ideas are exhausted.
- If you have no idea, simply pass.
- Expanding on others' ideas is encouraged.
- List as many ideas as possible.
- Absolutely no criticism of an idea is allowed. Criticism stifles creativity.
- Ideas can be as crazy and extravagant as possible. You will evaluate them later through modified voting.
- Clarification may be sought.
- Move as quickly as possible. Be brief when stating an idea.
- Set a time limit. People brainstorm better under pressure.

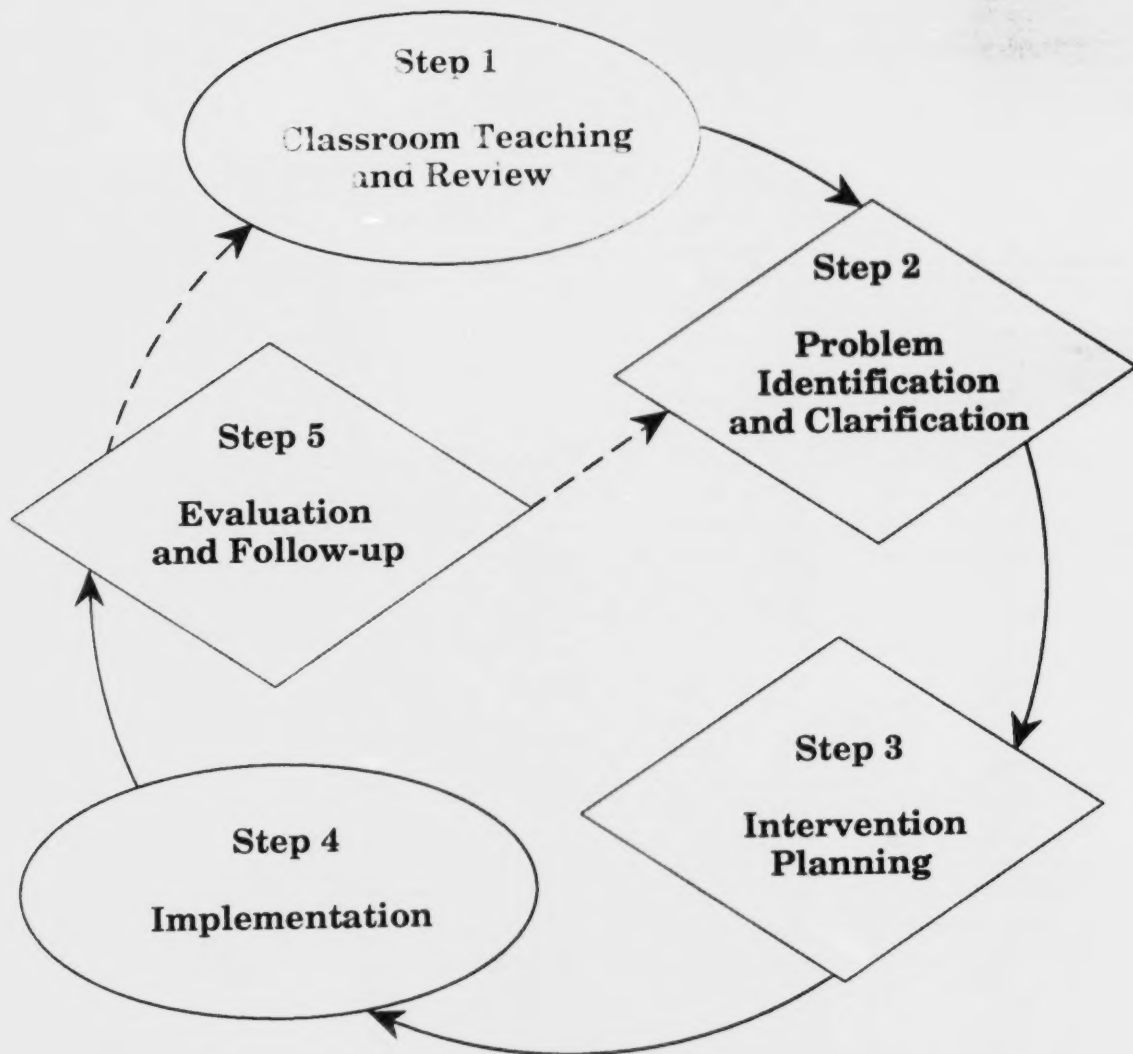
Group Voting

Group voting is a way of helping the group efficiently decide which ideas are going to be adopted. This is the stage where you analyze, criticize, and judge the worth of the ideas you have come up with as a group during brainstorming.

First, you must identify the criteria or goals that must be considered in your deliberation on each alternative. In this case the criteria for classroom interventions may consist of the following:

- high probability that you (the teacher) will implement the alternative
- the amount of work required to carry out the idea is reasonable
- high probability that the idea will lead to a successful resolution of the problem
- the intervention best solves the problem and minimizes the creation of new problems, given the constraints in this situation

Classroom Teaching and Review



Introduction to Step 1

Teachers continuously review student performance as they teach. They set expectations for their students and observe performance in order to assess competency or to determine whether there is a mismatch. Hopefully, teachers adjust curriculum or modify expectations to allow for differences in student learning styles and needs.

In this section, there will be three readings: *Rationale for Problem Solving*, *Expectations*, and *Match/Mismatch*. Each reading will be discussed in group settings.

Reading

Rationale for Problem Solving

Students experiencing difficulty in school need to be identified and assisted as early as possible. If this is not done, their problems may become so debilitating that the cycle of failure becomes difficult to reverse. By failing to adequately analyze concerns, and to assess and provide appropriate interventions, the educational system may actually contribute to the student's learning and behavior problems; depriving the student of the opportunity to achieve the goals of education and become productive adults and citizens.

Effective problem solving starts with an open-minded review of the entire situation, including all people, program components, and interactions. It is not adequate to rely solely on teacher judgment or instinct in defining the varied problem situations teachers encounter on a daily basis. Relying on instinct alone limits one's perspective of a "problem" and one's ability to generate creative solutions. Frequently, teachers work alone to deal with educational problems (the "Lone Ranger Approach"), relying mostly on their instincts and feelings about students, the curriculum, and what the educational system will allow. This isolated approach to decision making may occur because teachers believe that they should be "experts" in everything involving education; or it may be because a more systematic and collaborative approach is more difficult and more time consuming. Whatever the reason, a "Lone Ranger Approach" to decision making short-circuits the problem-solving process by dealing with the most obvious and expedient, but perhaps not the most critical, aspects of the situation.

Because society expects teachers to be experts, teachers are almost compelled to judge the nature of the problem and "fix-it" as swiftly as possible. Additionally, the nature of their working environment leads many teachers to feel isolated and disconnected from their colleagues in their attempts to deal with students who exhibit learning or behavior problems. There is often no vehicle available to share common concerns, ideas, and strategies with other professionals. As a result, educators often do not carefully and accurately focus on perhaps the most critical aspect of the problem-solving process: defining the concern. What is looked for, what is considered important, and what is perceived as a contingency and side effect all are influenced by the initial definition of the concern. Focusing on a "quick-fix" solution prematurely limits a thorough exploration of interpretations and alternatives. Teachers may view the problem as residing primarily outside of themselves, rather than taking all aspects of the learning environment into consideration. Selecting appropriate interventions

generally comes easily and naturally when the concern is clearly stated and carefully examined. Asking pertinent questions and gathering and analyzing relevant data in a comprehensive manner is a time-consuming and intellectually challenging task, requiring a collaborative approach. When teachers feel pressured to take action quickly, their judgments may lead to inappropriate programming for students.

Systematic and strategic problem solving described in the PARTNERS program is needed when addressing educational concerns in the classroom. This is a continuous process, both formal and informal, with the purpose of reviewing student performance and behavior in order to sort out those student attributes or aspects of the learning situation requiring special attention. This problem-solving process takes into account all aspects of the student's environment. This includes the school, but it also could include home and community environments. Effective problem solving involves a cooperative effort between a variety of persons, including regular and special educators, support staff, parents, community representatives, and the student.

As you begin analyzing the situations presented in this program, the collaborative approach to problem solving presented may seem awkward at first. As you practice and master the skills of this model, you will begin to reap the benefits of the resourcefulness and creativity gained by working with others to affect positive change in student learning and behavior.

As you will see in the next reading, expectations also play a critical role in the educational process.

For Further Thought

1. Considering this reading, list at least three factors you weigh heavily when making decisions about students who exhibit learning and behavior problems.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Discuss why each is an important factor.

2. List two or three sources of information available to you during the problem-solving process that would provide insight about a student's learning and behavior characteristics, needs, and possible intervention strategies.

Reading

Expectations

We all like to know what is expected in any environment. It is especially important to students, who are in the process of shaping their future behaviors, personality, self-concept, and academic potential. According to the dictionary, the term "expectation" refers to something considered likely or certain, something considered obligatory, or something required. Applied to education, the term refers to the values or standards for student behavior and performance that is held by others.

The "others" who set standards include family, friends, teachers, administrators, school boards, and the community — locally, nationally, and globally. In addition, students set standards for their own behavior and performance based on their perceptions of their environments. These standards and expectations may be set according to the student's age, sex, socio-economic status, grade level, feelings of self-worth, or other factors. Educators most often base their mode of operation, methods, materials, and teaching strategies on expectations. They subsequently gauge a student's academic competency and behavioral appropriateness in terms of these expectations.

Explicit Expectations

Expectations may be explicit or implicit. Explicit expectations are definite, clearly defined, and specified. For example, a teacher may expect fourth graders to compute long-division problems with remainders on their homework. If a student completes all 20 of the division problems but leaves the remainder at the end of their computations, instead of bringing it into the quotient, the teacher may judge the student to have failed in respect to this expectation.

Implicit Expectations

Implicit expectations are implied, assumed to be understood, but not clearly expressed. Teachers may assume their classroom expectations or those of the instructional program or material are already understood by the student. Expectations that are unclear to the teacher won't be clear to the student. For example, the teacher may ask a student questions in order to check the student's reading comprehension. The student may respond with "yes" or "no," or a brief phrase, then comment on tangential information. The teacher's implied or implicit expectations were that the student would answer with a complete sentence and provide details to support the answer. The student failed to meet the teacher's expectation, but more accurately, the teacher failed to clarify expectations, communicate them, and to develop an appropriate program to help the student meet the expectation.

Academic, Behavioral Expectations

Expectations also may be either academic or behavioral. Academic expectations consist of performance, activities, and timelines related to academic learning functions. The following are some examples of academic expectations:

- academic quality or quantity
- accuracy
- rate of work
- amount of comprehension or retention
- amount of teacher attention or feedback given
- ability to organize thoughts or materials

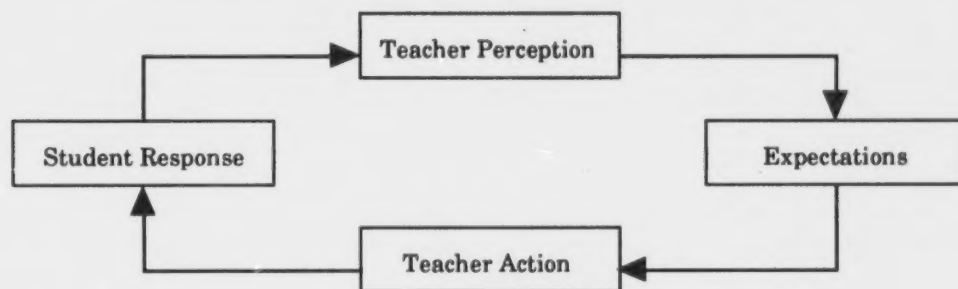
Behavioral expectations consist of conduct, activities, or mannerisms displayed by a student that are observable, measurable, and required in a given situation. Behavioral expectations are important because research indicates that a student's classroom behavior may have more to do with a successful school experience than with the student's academic skills. If a student is not able to meet certain behavioral expectations, there may be a severe impact on the overall educational success. The following are some examples of behavioral expectations:

- attentiveness
- on-task behavior
- time management
- preparedness
- participation
- appropriate use of humor
- knowing when to ask questions
- knowing when to talk to others
- knowing when to sharpen a pencil
- knowing how to address the teacher
- knowing what to do when problems arise

Students having learning and behavior problems in school quite often do not "pick-up" on usual and typical social cues that the majority of their peers seem to understand automatically. For this reason, behavioral expectations need to be very clearly defined, straightforward, reasonable, and yet challenging. In addition, the consequences for not meeting expectations must be equally clear and understood by students. If students understand the format and rules of a class or school, they will be more likely to manage their own behavior during class congruent with teacher expectations.

Implicit behavioral and academic expectations often result in mismatches between teacher expectations and student performance, especially for students exhibiting learning and behavior problems. This may lead to significant frustrations and escalating problems on the part of both teacher and student.

The Cycle of Expectations: How are expectations developed?



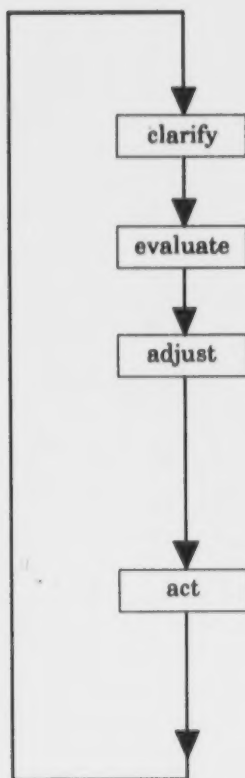
The cycle of expectations begins with the **teacher's perceptions** of the student. These may be based on the following factors: intelligence test results, sex, name, cumulative folder, ethnic background, knowledge of sibling and family, physical characteristics, previous achievement, socio-economic status, and student input.

Teacher perceptions influence the next step, **expectations**. Teacher expectations tend to create a reality commensurate with their perceptions. This further supports the importance of avoiding the use of instinct or isolated judgement previously mentioned in *Rationale for Problem Solving* on pages 16-17. Perceptions based on biased or inaccurate information may negatively affect teacher expectations.

Next, expectations influence **teacher action**. If the student's reading comprehension test scores are low, the teacher may assume the student simply doesn't know the answer when hesitating after being called on to answer a comprehension question. (The student may be just thinking and formulating the answer.) The teacher may prompt the student at first but may later avoid asking comprehension questions in order to not embarrass the student in front of peers.

The final step in the cycle is **student response**. Students generally respond by exhibiting behavior that complements and reinforces the teacher's expectations. Students may learn that if they don't answer immediately, the teacher will take the pressure off and not let them risk giving a wrong answer; or they may never get the practice if the teacher stops calling on them.

Teacher expectations is only one factor explaining student performance behavior. According to William Glasser, all children (adults as well) attempt to act in a way that satisfies their own needs. One of those needs is to feel in control of what goes on in their environment. Based on these needs, children make choices on how they act in a given situation. Thus, children who resist learning or believe they can not learn, or who are disruptive in the classroom for all practical purposes are attempting to meet their needs by controlling their environment. They do so most often in an effort to avoid the pain of being compared to their peers. Many, if not all, teachers have experienced the frustration of trying to deal with or teach a student who simply did not want to be dealt with or taught. It is difficult to say who has more control in that situation . . . teacher or student. When developing expectations for the classrooms of the 1990s, it will be important for teachers to recognize these students' needs by asking for student input in developing explicit, reasonable, yet challenging standards of performance and behavior and then providing students with choices (and accompanying consequences) for their effort toward attaining those expectations.



Teachers can change behavior by changing expectations and actions. Managing the cycle of expectations is necessary in order for a student having difficulty to make progress.

Step 1: Clarify expectations. Become aware of academic and behavioral expectations. Be sure expectations are explicit. Classroom expectations may need to be posted.

Step 2: Evaluate if expectations are realistic for the student. Ask if the student has the prerequisite knowledge or skills needed to fulfill the expectation.

Step 3: Adjust or change expectations. Develop a series of performance interventions designed to provide the prerequisite knowledge or social skills, or alternative compensation skills. Interventions should be developed to address a proposed change in behavior and to indicate who will do what under which circumstances. A means to evaluate behavior change must be determined.

Step 4: Change Actions. Provide instruction and practice geared to modified performance expectations. Modified objectives or expectations do not necessarily mean lowered expectations. By focusing on student strengths and more accurately pinpointing mismatches, expectations may be upgraded, resulting in greater progress and a better match between educational activities and student performance.

Once a teacher knows what is expected of a specific group of students, the teacher must look at student performance and behavior. The concept of match/mismatch is useful in detecting discrepancies between teacher expectations and student performance. This concept is explained in the next section.

Reference

Glasser, William. *Control Theory in the Classroom*. New York, NY: Perennial Library, 1985.

For Further Thought

1. What are several implicit expectations you have for your students? How can they be more explicitly defined?

2. One of the characteristics identified in students with learning and behavior problems is poor self-esteem. Think about a student you have (or had) who felt as if they were incapable of learning.
 - a. How might a student's self-esteem impact your expectations for that student?

 - b. How might these expectations affect student behavior and learning?

Reading

Match / Mismatch

Typically during the first step in the process, Classroom Teaching and Review, teachers assess student performance in relation to their expectations. The academic and behavioral performance of most students is relatively consistent with expectations (performance and expectations usually “match”). For example, the teacher may expect a fourth grader to read aloud fluently and with expression to indicate understanding of the material. If the student meets that expectation, the academic performance “matches” the teacher’s expectation.

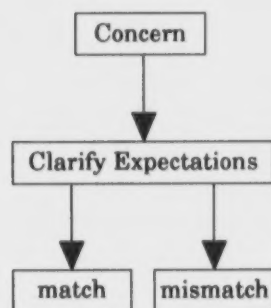
Sometimes performance does not match expectations for whatever reason — a “red flag” is raised triggering a concern. Concerns are generalized feelings that something is wrong. When analyzed more specifically, “mismatches,” or specific discrepancies between behavior or academic performance and expectations, are identified. For example, if the fourth grader mentioned above doesn’t change his or her inflection according to punctuation and reads in a monotone, the student’s performance “mismatches” the teacher’s expectations.

The PARTNERS process uses the concepts of “match” and “mismatch” to clarify expectations and concerns regarding student academic and behavioral performance. The teacher can apply these concepts when concerned about a student’s academic and behavioral performance. Note also that the terminology used, “match” and “mismatch,” does not negatively stigmatize the teacher or the student. This concept implies an ecological perspective to problem solving. While the focus is on discrepancies between teacher expectations and student performance, mismatches can result from problematic interactions between teaching styles or techniques and student learning styles, curriculum materials, and physical space. All of these factors should be taken into

consideration when analyzing mismatches.

The match/mismatch procedure lends itself to early detection of specific problems. It also helps maintain a student-focused approach to problem solving rather than the teacher-centered approach. It is important to note that what the teacher does has a major and direct impact on student performance. However, focusing on the teacher as the primary problem often results in the educator in question becoming defensive and closing themselves off to problem solving rather than involving themselves in the process.

Using the match/mismatch concept is fairly straightforward. The teacher begins by noting tasks the student is expected to complete. The teacher then observes the student’s behavior or performance in relation to those expectations. Matches are generally easily identified. However, when a concern is identified, the teacher notes a mismatch related to the expectation. The teacher narrows the mismatch from, for example, academic performance, to reading, to reading level, to oral reading activities,



to the specific reading skills for which student performance does not match teacher expectations. At the same time, the teacher may begin to identify what interactions or "contributing factors" are leading to this mismatch.

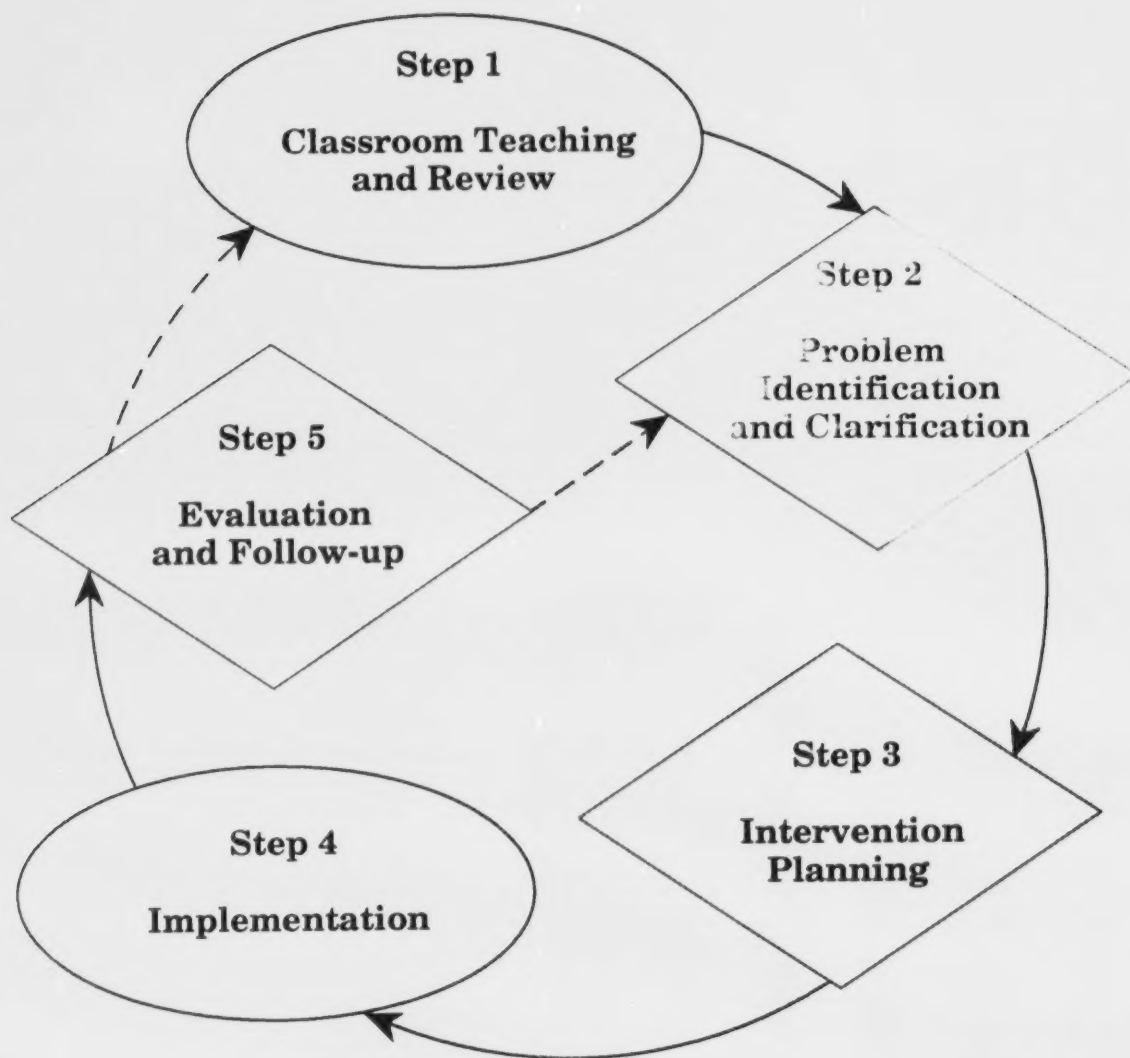
The match/mismatch procedure also offers a structure for defining what the teacher expects a student to do and what the student actually does. Analyzing this information is critical to subsequent steps in the instructional decision-making process.

For Further Thought

1. What are some advantages of using a "match/mismatch" approach to clarifying concerns?

2. Can you see any ways that matches and mismatches can be used to clarify teacher expectations?

Problem Identification and Clarification



Introduction to Step 2

The next step in the PARTNERS in Problem Solving process is Problem Identification and Clarification. Teachers gather information during Classroom Teaching and Review (Step 1) and identify concerns they have about student learning and behavior problems. They come to a PARTNERS meeting with a concern regarding a student. These concerns are translated into mismatches and are clarified with the assistance of the PARTNERS and through a collaborative problem-solving process.

In this section, participants will discuss readings and be guided through a series of activities using video case studies. They also will identify concerns they have regarding their own students.

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Expectations

Clear, specific, and explicit expectations are essential to identifying matches and mismatches. The decision-making process starts here. This activity focuses on how to define expectations explicitly so they can be seen and heard. A good rule of thumb to use in gauging the clarity of an expectation is to ask, "If two people saw (or heard) the same thing, would they describe it in the same way?" NOTE: It is critical that the process of clarifying expectations be done collaboratively. This assists all PARTNERS to gain valuable insight into a teacher's concern.

Instructions

Use the worksheet on page 30 and the Helpful Hint on page 28 to complete this activity.

1. Working in pairs according to grade or age level, **brainstorm** a list of expectations that exist in your classrooms.
2. **Choose** one academic **and** one behavioral expectation to define more clearly. See examples on page 29.
3. **Define** what the fulfilled expectations should look like *or* sound like.
4. After you have defined your expectations, **identify** one possible match and one possible mismatch for each.

Helpful Hint

Defining Expectations, Matches, and Mismatches

It is important to identify expectations so that students and others can understand what you mean by them. Below are some verbs that may be helpful to use when clarifying expectations, matches, and mismatches. The expectation, match, or mismatch may be further clarified by answering "how" or "what" to the verb selected.

Example:

Verb — Follow directions (Ask how or what)

Expectation: The student will follow teacher's directions after they're given.

Acceptable Terms

add, multiply, divide, etc.	find	read
answer (verbally)	follow directions	recall
bring	identify	repair
choose	listen	respond
circle	list	review
compare	look at	say
complete/finish	make	select/choose
copy	match	sit
correct	move	solve
count	name aloud	sort
define	organize	spell
demonstrate/show	place/put	stop
describe	plan	summarize
distinguish	point	underline
draw	practice	use/utilize
evaluate	prepare	verbalize
explain	proofread	write
	prove	

Unacceptable Terms—These are often misinterpreted and are difficult to clearly define.

apply (a skill)	develop	master
appreciate	enjoy	realize
can	know	understand
	learn	

Academic expectations	Looks like/Sounds like (Remember, ask what would you see or hear if the student was meeting the expectation.)	
1. <i>Student will come to class prepared.</i>	<i>Student has books, pencil, paper, and homework upon arriving to class.</i> <i>Student can find notes or worksheet quickly.</i>	<i>Match: Student brings needed materials to class.</i> <i>Mismatch: Student often forgets materials and has to be reminded.</i>
2.		
Behavioral expectations	Looks like/Sounds like (Remember, ask what would you see or hear if the student was meeting the expectation.)	
1. <i>Student will be courteous and respectful to others.</i>	<i>Student shares materials.</i> <i>Student allows others to take their turn first.</i> <i>Student keeps hands and feet to oneself.</i> <i>"Thank you for helping me."</i> <i>"Gee, that was nice of you."</i> <i>"You were first, go ahead."</i> <i>"Can I use that after you."</i>	<i>Match: Student shares materials with others.</i> <i>Mismatch: Student has trouble sharing—often grabs things away from others.</i>
2.		

Worksheet - Expectations

Academic expectations	Looks like/Sounds like (Remember, ask what would you see or hear if the student was meeting the expectation.)	
1.		Match: Mismatch:
2.		
Behavioral expectations	Looks like/Sounds like (Remember, ask what would you see or hear if the student was meeting the expectation.)	
1.		Match: Mismatch:
2.		

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Match/Mismatch

Given the following expectations, list one possible match and one possible mismatch for each:

Expectation	Match	Mismatch
1. Students will raise hand prior to asking a question.		
2. Students will show computational work when completing word problems.		
3. Students will come to class prepared with needed materials.		

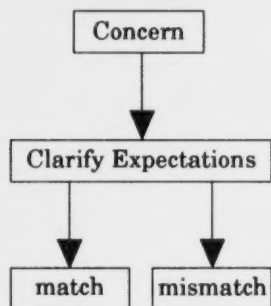
Activity

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Using Concerns and Expectations to Identify Matches and Mismatches

Introduction

Specific matches and mismatches between expectations and student performance and behavior are identified by examining broad concerns and clarifying expectations.



For example, a **concern** might be that a student has poor reading comprehension. Upon further discussion and examination, the teacher might **clarify** the **expectations** that the student should silently read a passage and independently write correct answers to 90 percent of the comprehension questions following the passage. **Mismatches** might include

- the student can't read the passage independently
- the student doesn't understand or can't read the questions
- the student can't write correct responses to at least 90 percent of the questions

It is quite possible that the student has some **matches** as well (for example, the student understands and can respond to the questions, but needs help to read the passage). These also should be identified.

It is important that teachers discuss concerns and expectations with at least one other educator. Such discussion helps teachers identify mismatches and make expectations explicit. Asking others to share in the problem-solving process also increases the likelihood that possible contributing factors and, eventually, potential successful interventions, are not overlooked.

It is best to start the problem-solving process with fairly broad concerns that are directly related to mismatches between performance or behavior and expectations. Once matches and mismatches are identified, the PARTNERS can explore contributing factors that can further explain the mismatch, identify strengths, and provide specific targets for intervention. In the above example, further examination of matches and mismatches may yield information indicating that the student can not read the passage because it is too hard, not that the student has trouble comprehending or responding to comprehension questions. This finding would point to a need to either modify expectations and have the student read passages at a lower level or provide assistance so that the student could understand the reading at the higher level before responding to questions.

To be useful, mismatches should be

- related to the expectations the student is not meeting,
- student centered (specify something specific the student is having difficulty with), and
- phrased in a way that will allow for analysis and intervention in the educational context (relate to an academic or behavioral expectation the student is not meeting *in the classroom context*).

The following activity focuses on utilizing concerns and expectations to identify matches and mismatches that are student centered and that lend themselves to intervention in the educational environment.

Instructions

Follow the example on page 34 and use the worksheet on page 35 to complete this activity.

1. Think about a student(s) who you have a concern about as you do this exercise. Working in pairs, *share your concern(s)*.
2. **Identify** one academic and one behavioral expectation you would like to discuss in relation to your concern. You may choose to expand upon one from the Expectations exercise on page 30 if appropriate.
3. **Discuss** then **write** the academic **and** behavioral expectation you have selected on the form. Your expectations should be clear and specific.
4. **Discuss** ways the student may or may not be meeting the expectations (possible mismatches and matches).
5. **Write** the **mismatches** relative to the expectations. Remember, the mismatches should be fairly specific; student centered; and allow for intervention in the educational context.
6. It is important to remember the matches. Rarely does a student not meet any portion of an expectation. After noting mismatches, **write** the possible **matches** for a student who might not be fully meeting the expectation.

Example

Concern: *The student has trouble with reading comprehension*

Expectations	Possible mismatches	Matches
<i>The student will independently read the passage and correctly answer 90 percent of the comprehension questions.</i>	<i>Always asks for help.</i> <i>Has trouble decoding new words.</i> <i>Reads at lower level.</i> <i>Can't read comprehension questions.</i> <i>Doesn't understand questions.</i> <i>Can't write answers.</i> <i>Can do work—wants attention.</i>	<i>Reads well when sits near teacher.</i> <i>Can answer comprehension questions orally.</i> <i>Works independently once started.</i> <i>Retains sight vocabulary well.</i> <i>Decodes CVC and CVCE patterns consistently.</i>
<i>Student will stay seated and work for a half-hour work period.</i>	<i>Is constantly out of seat.</i> <i>Does not complete work.</i> <i>Needs many prompts to work.</i> <i>Directions must be repeated.</i> <i>Disrupts others by talking.</i> <i>Work that is completed is often wrong—average percent correct = 67%.</i>	<i>Can work for 10-minute periods.</i> <i>Works well when next to teacher and given frequent feedback.</i> <i>Work that is completed is accurate (90% to 100%).</i> <i>Stays on task when working with a partner, but not by self.</i>

Worksheet – Using Concerns and Expectations to Identify Matches and Mismatches

Concern:

Expectations

Possible Mismatches

Matches

Activity

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Checking for Useful Mismatch Statements

Introduction

As previously mentioned, clearly identifying the target concern(s) and expectations related to mismatch(es) is critical to the problem-solving process. When asked to come up with "problem statements," we often identify both the root concern as well as numerous related problems, symptoms, and contributing factors. Interventions are most successful if they are directed at critical mismatches (ones that would make a real difference in the student's academic or social functioning). This activity focuses on how to check your mismatch statements to make sure they represent a critical concern and not simply a contributing factor or superfluous problem. Sometimes, during the process of analyzing mismatches, it becomes obvious that expectations should be adjusted. If it is reasonable to do so, this should be done. Sometimes, simply adjusting expectations resolves a mismatch.

Instructions

1. Working in your PARTNERS group, **look at the mismatches** you identified in the previous activity.
2. **Ask the questions** from the Check List for Mismatch Statements about each mismatch you identified.
3. **Make a check mark** on your form, next to each mismatch that meets the criteria from the Check List for Mismatch Statements (check if you can answer yes to each question below).
4. **Rewrite or eliminate** any mismatches that do not meet the criteria (you may decide that your expectations should be adjusted at this point).

Resource

Check List for Mismatch Statements

- ☐ **If the mismatch was resolved, would the student meet the academic or behavior expectations? Would the concern be significantly reduced?**
Would resolving the mismatch significantly improve the situation—would it make the student's performance or behavior acceptable?
- ☐ **Is the mismatch student centered?**
Is it written as something the *student* is or is not doing?
- ☐ **Can the mismatch be addressed in the educational environment?**
 - a. Can potential interventions be implemented in the class or school environment?
 - b. Will school personnel be able to monitor progress toward resolving the mismatch?
- ☐ **Do all members of the team agree that this is a critical mismatch?**
- ☐ **Do all members of the team agree on the definition of the mismatch as it is stated?**
Do all agree that the mismatch means the same thing?

Step 2: Independent Practice Activity

Problem Identification

It is now time to take what you have learned about the PARTNERS problem-solving and decision-making process thus far and apply it to a practical situation from your own classroom. You may have completed this activity through number 4 after completing the previous activity.

Instructions

1. Individually, **identify a student** in your classroom whose academic performance or behavior concerns you. If you wish, you may chose to work on a different student than you did in the previous activities. You will be using this student throughout the remainder of the PARTNERS program. Note your primary concern. Think about the expectations you have for this student and how the student is meeting or not meeting expectations (matches and mismatches).
2. With a PARTNER or two, share and **discuss your concern(s), expectations, and matches and mismatches**. Write your primary concern on the worksheet. You will be working with this PARTNER(s) for the remaining independent practice activities.
 - a. Ask, "What are the expectations you have for the student: What does the student need to do to be considered successful ("match")? Write these on the form.
 - b. Identify those expectations the student is meeting (matches) and those he or she is not meeting (mismatches).
3. **Discuss and write** the mismatches you've identified on the worksheet.
4. Use the Check List for Mismatch Statements to assess the usefulness of your mismatches.
5. **Modify your expectations, concerns, or mismatches** if needed as a result of your discussion. You have now completed the first half of Step 2: Problem Identification and Clarification.
6. **Repeat** this sequence for each member of your PARTNERS group.

Worksheet—Problem Identification

Concern:

Expectations

Possible Mismatches

Matches

Orientation Toward Problem Solving

Developing a Problem-Solving Orientation

The goals of problem solving are to identify mismatches between educational expectations and student academic performance and behavior and to develop and implement interventions to resolve the mismatch(es). Careful and accurate definition of a concern and contributing factors associated with related mismatch(es) between performance and expectations is crucial as an initial step in determining an intervention. Sometimes, interventions may include little more than a few simple modifications in curriculum or teaching methods, or some individual or small-group help. At other times, an intervention may be rather complex, involving a referral for special education and pull-out programming in addition to classroom modifications. What is important is the process by which the intervention is selected and the systematic implementation and monitoring of it.

Once a teacher has initiated the PARTNERS process for problem solving and intervention planning, the teacher has the benefit of sharing responsibility for making educational decisions with one or more educators. While operating in a team situation can provide many excellent solutions to a challenging situation, it also requires the participants to be able to effectively work together as a problem-solving group. This requires collaboration and a consistent "problem-solving" orientation. While teachers individually gather information, the main bulk of decisions made relevant to intervention planning occurs during one or two meetings. The content and process of these meetings follows.

Collaboration

Face-to-face communication between teachers is generally the most effective way to share information, brainstorm ideas, and plan intervention strategies for a student encountering difficulty. In order for this communication to result in interventions beneficial to the student and teacher(s) involved, it must be collaborative.

Collaboration involves working cooperatively to attain a mutual goal. It is an interactive process whereby participants with varied expertise share information and generate creative solutions to identified problems. Success, failure, and accountability all are shared. Each member is considered an equal and each is viewed as having something to share. Persons actively involved in a collaborative effort to screen and develop interventions for students encountering learning and behavior problems follow certain guidelines.

Collaborative Guidelines

1. **Agree on the purpose of the meeting** and goals of the problem-solving and intervention-planning process. What do you hope to accomplish (define the concern, agree upon an intervention strategy that will help the student in the classroom)? Unless an alternative is agreed upon, do not abandon the goal and go off on tangents. One group member should take responsibility for facilitating the meeting and keep the conversation on track.
2. **Stay student-centered.** Remember, you are there to help generate ideas that will help the student. Try to keep conversation in terms of the student's behavior, response to intervention, performance, and so forth. Be careful not to lay blame; rather, frame statements in terms of how a situation seemed to affect the student. Base interpretations on information gathered and analysis of student behavior.
3. **Use collaborative conversation skills.** Ask questions both to gather information, and to clarify ideas being presented. Be purposeful and direct when appropriate. Give specific feedback as appropriate. Be willing to receive feedback as well. Keep your vocabulary specific and clear. Avoid the use of educational jargon. Try to view disagreements as opportunities to elicit useful information.
4. **Use active listening.** Acknowledge other's conversation with eye contact, nodding, and so forth. Provide "invitations" for those who tend not to participate. Paraphrase what others say to demonstrate understanding and provide validation of what they are saying. Give others credit for their ideas and accomplishments. Provide direction to the group's work by asking for agreement on certain issues and then move on.
5. **Recognize individual differences** among those who implement program interventions. Change is a personal experience and involves planning, learning new behaviors, and adapting to new routines. There is a wide variety of differences in the rate of implementation, feelings, and reactions to new strategies. Remember that all team members are knowledgeable and competent professionals. Treat others with respect. Never try to force a teacher to implement an intervention that person is uncomfortable implementing. Be willing to ask for or provide modeling and examples of similar interventions. Be willing to learn from others. Avoid taking on the "expert" role.

By using these collaborative skills, educators engaged in problem solving and intervention planning will be able to describe student behavior, explain their opinions, paraphrase other's perspectives, encourage contributions from others, and arrive at a consensus with regard to what intervention should be implemented to alleviate a mismatch.

Educators who are approached by a colleague with a concern are often tempted and encouraged to give advice. While giving advice may seem to provide a quick solution, it is important to realize that it has some long-term negative effects. Advice giving sets up a dependent relationship between educators. While it empowers the "advice giver," it disempowers the colleague with the concern because it gives the message, "I'm telling you what to do, because I know you don't have any idea how to handle the situation." In addition, one must remember that although a strategy works for one teacher, it may not transfer well to another — advice giving is one way; only the person giving it defines how

it should work. Finally, when engaged in advice giving the educators usually are not involved in a learning process — new ideas are not generated. In summary, it is important to remember that advice giving has limited use and should be used infrequently.

Maintaining a Problem-Solving Orientation

Being able to maintain a student-centered problem-solving orientation during the team meeting is crucial to the PARTNERS process. The extra effort it takes is well worth the results.

A systematic problem-solving cycle helps structure the situation so that participants can be productive. It also helps maintain a coordinated effort by clearly defining participants' roles and the overall purpose of the process. Finally, efforts are documented. Alternative ideas are available if the first implementation plan fails to resolve the mismatch.

For Further Thought

1. In this reading, you found that collaboration requires that the PARTNERS have a mutual goal. What are some ways that PARTNERS can decide on this?

2. When dealing with a student with learning and behavior problems, we are often tempted to identify concerns that are only teacher or parent centered (the teacher's or parent's behavior is the concern) rather than student centered (the student's behavior is the key). Why do you think the PARTNERS process emphasizes keeping discussion about concerns student centered, keeping in mind the importance of ecological contributors such as student, teacher, classroom, and other environmental factors? What pitfalls could one get into if concerns are solely teacher or parent centered?

3. Being skilled at asking questions is critical while engaged in problem solving. Brainstorm a list of questions you think would be useful in the following categories.

a. questions to help clarify concerns

b. questions to help identify what information is needed to clarify concerns

c. questions to help analyze contributing factors

d. questions to help identify interventions that may successfully be implemented

4. Throughout the sessions, we strongly emphasize the importance of avoiding the "expert" role and avoiding giving advice when engaged in the PARTNERS process. Do you think there is ever an appropriate time to abandon a "problem-solving orientation" and give advice to a colleague?

Analysis of Contributing Factors

Asking Questions to Clarify Mismatches

Once the PARTNERS have identified expectations, matches, and mismatches, it is important to complete one more step prior to beginning intervention planning: asking questions to clarify mismatches.

During this stage, the PARTNERS goal is to determine if they have a complete picture of the mismatch and what might be contributing to it in order to develop an intervention that has a high potential for success. This is done by asking questions about each mismatch identified. For example, if a mismatch is: "The student forgets materials and must go get them daily," some appropriate questions to clarify this mismatch might be: Does the student forget materials for all classes? Does the student know what materials are needed? Is the student forgetting materials to avoid class and if so why? Has this been a problem for a long time? Responses to these questions yield invaluable information about contributing factors to the concern.

Many times, the PARTNERS can answer these questions easily. They often are aware of the student's past records and performance. Often enough, not all questions can be answered immediately. The PARTNERS may decide to break for a short period and investigate further. Documents such as attendance records, past test data, report cards, and observational information can provide a teacher with some important insights about the student. Sometimes the information can be gained by simply asking the student, parent, or previous teacher.

It is important to take information from a variety of sources prior to targeting student mismatches and planning interventions. While standardized tests and check lists can provide critical data about a student's performance and social-emotional functioning, it is important to recognize that any such instrument can be questioned regarding its reliability and validity. No single measure should ever be used to verify a student's abilities or behavior. It is not unusual to find discrepancies between test scores on different tests that purport to measure the same attribute. Discrepancies between test scores and classroom performance also are common.

When utilizing the data from standardized measures, one should analyze the test items to determine what they are actually measuring. If possible, it also is helpful to observe the student taking the test or part of the test to gain awareness of the student's test-taking strategies and behavior. Identify any other factors that might explain testing discrepancies. If necessary, develop informal tasks to test a particular attribute in the instructional setting. **In the final analysis, the teacher's observations and interactions with students in the classroom are the most valuable source of data on student abilities and behavior.**

There are several categories of information contributing to mismatches that a teacher might review. This review is critical to achieving the clearest and most accurate view of student strengths, weaknesses, needs, and potential successful interventions.

1. Student Variables

Specific student information such as

- Student age
- Parents' names and address
- Primary language
- Cultural "differences"
- Community information

Educational history (cumulative records) such as

- Standardized test scores (readiness, achievement, IQ, behavior check lists)
- Report cards
- Attendance records
- Anecdotal notes from observations, interviews
- Previous referrals for educational and support services
- Previous interventions
- Current levels of performance — functional achievement from class work, teacher-made tests, curriculum-based measures, other informal tests)

Medical records such as

- Documented physical problems (vision, hearing, health)
- Medication used and medication side affects

Current work samples (past work samples if available)

2. Classroom Variables

- Description of the physical setting, (size of room, lighting, position of desks)
- Make-up of peers, student body
- School and classroom rules and routines
- Structuring of classroom activities (independent or group work, monitoring and feedback procedures)

3. Teacher Variables

- Teaching methods and techniques used
- Teaching style
- Teacher expectations
- Attitude toward student
- Lesson plans
- Grading system and evaluation methods used

In some cases, information gathered may lead to an obvious next step: to call the student's parents to discuss the educational implications of a noted difficulty or to probe the parents, teacher, or student further about the circumstances surrounding incidents or test scores. Notes should be maintained with regard to the content, source, and date of pertinent information found. The final product of the information analysis should be the following:

1. evidence and source of the contributing factors relevant to the mismatch
2. behavioral and academic characteristics identified

3. how the contributing factors might be related to the mismatches. Are they independent or a result of a deeper problem? Is there a pattern of difficulties that is evidenced through the information reviewed?

4. ramifications of these contributing factors in the short run and long run

5. any interventions implemented in the past that have either helped or intensified the mismatches

Much has been written about teacher analysis of students' skills and achievement levels. Since teacher observations are the most valuable source of data on student abilities, some basic observation techniques are reviewed in the next reading.

For Further Thought

1. Give some examples of situations in which the classroom environment could be a contributing factor to a student's learning or behavior problem.

2. Why is it important to compare teaching methods and teaching style with student strengths, weaknesses, and needs when analyzing mismatches? How might teacher variables interact with student behavior and performance?

3. Some education professionals caution teachers not to look at previous records before beginning to work with students.

a. Do you think this has any validity?

b. How can a teacher try to limit bias due to previous reports of students?

4. What sources of information have you found to be most useful when analyzing educational concerns you have about students?

Reading

Observation Techniques

As mentioned previously, there are times that PARTNERS do not have all the answers to their questions about the mismatches they have identified. When this is the case, review of records, a short informal test, or other information must be gathered. Observation is one of the most useful techniques to gather information about student academic and behavioral performance.

Observation is an essential element of all classroom practices. Observation is a term that can be applied to a range of activities, including informal observations of students as they interact with teachers, peers, and classroom materials; and systematic and focused observations of individual student behaviors. The primary purpose of observing students in educational situations is to further develop an information base with which to identify and analyze student performance and behavior and to develop strategies to alleviate any concerns. Data collected by a skilled observer may not be as biased as are global judgments about what is going on. Data from observations may be used to substantiate or refute other assessment data. Finally, observational data can provide a baseline and ongoing evaluative information about how students are doing as a result of a particular intervention.

As educators, we are constantly observing. However, we rarely record what we see. The conscious use of observational techniques is imperative to isolating and clarifying specific actions that might be the key to analyzing a mismatch between student behavior and teacher or environmental expectations, and to subsequently changing a behavior or environmental factor, developing a skill, or learning a new strategy during the PARTNERS process.

General Observation Tips

Observation for the purpose of student screening and problem solving always includes the identification and recording of behaviors that can be seen or heard in a given environment. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to record teacher or peer behaviors as well as a description of the educational environment and the target student's behaviors. During the observation, only the events observed are recorded in precise, non-judgmental language. Recording should occur as soon as possible, ideally, during the observation. Analysis or the impressions of the observer at the time should not be included as part of the observation record. Once the observation is completed, the data is analyzed with the goal of identifying patterns of behavior as well as constraints and opportunities for promoting change. Target behaviors may be selected for change and intervention plans developed. Both academic and social behaviors may be observed.

Observation Techniques

The observational techniques most frequently utilized with regard to students who exhibit learning and behavior problems include: anecdotal recording, frequency or event recording, duration recording, and time sampling. In observation, as in other

aspects of education, there is no single way to deal with all student concerns. Likewise, there is no "right" observational technique to use to gather student data. Teacher skill and experience guides the selection of observational techniques. The most common observational techniques are described below.

Anecdotal recording consists of the exact occurrences during a particular observation. Anecdotal records also may include teacher summaries of an event following the event's occurrence, such as when a teacher maintains a "notebook" on a student. It is extremely important for the observer to only write exactly what is being done and said by and to the student being observed. Despite the time required, no other observational method gives such a full picture of a situation nor allows for such deep analysis.

Frequency or event recording is one of the most frequently used observational measurements. While observing, the teacher simply keeps a count of the number of times a particular behavior occurs over a certain period of time. This is usually accomplished via a tally sheet or check list. Frequency recording can be used for a variety of behaviors that teachers may wish to record, for example, talking in class, hitting, cursing, reading sight words correctly, and number of errors made on academic work. This method is most appropriate for measuring behaviors that are short in duration and take about the same amount of time to perform on each occurrence.

Duration recording, the measurement of how long a certain behavior is engaged in, is appropriate for assessing actions such as out-of-seat behavior, daydreaming, duration of tardiness, and length of time taken to respond to questions or to complete assignments. Using this method, the teacher keeps a running record of behaviors, the times they began, and the times they stopped. One difficulty with duration recording is that the observer must pay continuous attention to the student being observed. For this reason, duration recording is most effectively accomplished during times when other students are engaged in independent work or by an outside observer.

Time sampling is sensitive to both frequency and duration and is more easily implemented than duration recording. An example would be rating student behavior at various points in the day (checking off whether a student is on or off task at five-minute intervals throughout a period). An estimate of the percentage of time a student is engaged in a specific behavior may be derived from such measures. Using simple tally formats can make this technique quite easy to use.

Guidelines for Observation

Extreme care must be taken to obtain data from observations that leads to accurate interpretation of the meaning of student behavior. It is important to remember that student behavior can have many meanings. It is the role of the teacher to consider all possible reasons for and variables surrounding student behavior and to use observational and other data to develop the clearest picture of student behavior and performance possible. The following guidelines are provided with regard to effective observation skills.

1. **Detach** — Free yourself temporarily from your normal involvement. Become the observer, not the participant.

2. **Scan** — Survey the whole setting before selecting those features to focus on. Scanning helps you become oriented and helps you discover unexpected data.
3. **Focus** — Direct your attention to one or two behaviors or situations in the observational setting. Focusing helps you see details more clearly.
4. **Record** — Write down raw data during or immediately after the observation.
5. **Distinguish Between Raw Data and Conclusions** — Observations are raw data, not your analysis or interpretations. Write only what you see or hear as part of your data. Chart or graph your data to facilitate interpretation.
6. **Draw Inferences from Raw Data** — Identify the possible meanings of the data. Inferences are tentative and allow alternative responses to data. Search for alternative explanations. Share your data with others and get their input.
7. **Test Inferences** — Ask yourself whether or not the data support your inferences. Go back and look at the data again, get more information from others, do a more focused observation.
8. **Design and Implement Intervention** strategies based on your analysis of the data. Continue the PARTNERS process, adding information gained to your discussion of contributing factors.

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Asking Questions and Collecting Information

For the following mismatches, note what questions you would like to answer to clarify the mismatch. Then identify what sources or information-collection methods you might use to answer the questions if you did not have the information on hand.

1. **Mismatch:** Jamie often does not bring needed materials to the reading group. The teacher must delay beginning the lesson and send Jamie back to get the materials.

Questions to ask:

Sources/methods to collect information:

2. **Mismatch:** Sandy does not meet expectations (at least eight of ten words correct) for weekly spelling tests — rarely getting more than 50 percent correct. The teacher thinks that Sandy's daily worksheets are acceptable, but has not really kept track of it.

Questions to ask:

Sources/methods to collect information:

3. **Mismatch:** Marty frequently refuses to work independently. Marty asks for help often, even after the teacher gives additional directions and is almost certain Marty knows what to do. The teacher would like Marty to work independently for at least most of the half-hour work period.

Questions to ask:

Sources/methods to collect information:

Activity

Step 2: Guided Practice Activity

Analyzing Contributing Factors and Clarifying Concerns

Introduction

After identifying mismatches, it is necessary to discuss and analyze possible contributing factors that might be affecting mismatch(es) in your PARTNERS team. Such analysis is needed to help determine the extent of a problem, why it might be occurring, and possible successful intervention strategies.

To accomplish this, the PARTNERS should ask all questions they have about the mismatch(es) identified. If the questions can be answered immediately they should be. If not, it will be necessary to stop the problem-solving meeting temporarily to collect additional information related to contributing factors. Asking questions is the critical first step to analyzing contributing factors to the concern. The PARTNERS team should ask questions relative to possible student, classroom, and teacher variables.

The following activity focuses on completing the entire Problem Identification and Clarification step. Particular emphasis is on asking questions and analyzing contributing factors related to mismatches between student performance or behavior and expectations.

Case Study Instructions

1. **Watch the video vignette.** Use one observation technique described in the Observation reading on pages 46-48 to note information as you watch. Take notes on a piece of paper.
2. Working in PARTNERS groups of two or three, **identify concerns and expectations** from your observation, **select a concern** you think is important to address, and **write the concern** on the following worksheet.
3. Write **expectations** related to this concern on the worksheet.
4. Discuss matches and mismatches related to the expectations observed. Write the **mismatches** on the following worksheet.
5. **Use the Check List for Mismatch Statements (Appendix C), place an asterisk (*)** next to the ones you select. Reword mismatches if necessary and select one or two critical mismatches to address.
6. Brainstorm a list of possible **questions** related to clarifying the mismatch(es) that you think would be important to address prior to intervention planning. **Write at least**

one question for each category: student variables, classroom variables, teacher variables. You may wish to refer to the List of Contributing Factors, which follows these instructions and the worksheet, on pages 53-56. Discuss what information you would need to answer your questions, analyze contributing factors, and clarify the mismatch(es). Where would you find the information you need?

7. Read the information in the case study packets. Review and **analyze** available student information and data attempting to find the answers to your questions. Take notes in the "analysis of contributing factors" section of the worksheet. Discuss your findings.

8. **Clarify mismatch(es)** based on your analysis. Add, eliminate, or rewrite mismatches as appropriate.

Worksheet - Intervention Plan

The numbers on this worksheet correspond to the numbers in the instructions on pages 50-51.

2. Concern: _____

3. Expectations

4. Mismatch(es)

5. *Most important ones

7. Analysis of
Contributing Factors

6. Questions Related to Mismatches

Student Variables	Classroom Variables	Teacher Variables

8. Clarify Mismatch(es)

List of Contributing Factors

Resource

When analyzing a problem situation leading to a mismatch, it is important to look at all possible contributions. There is a difference between contributing factors and the concern (mismatch). Some contributing factors are thought to be the targeted problem, when they actually add to or disguise the true problem. When energy and time are used to "solve" it, the problem still exists. All targeted behaviors have contributing factors, but not all contributing factors lead to resolving the targeted problem.

The best test to use in determining whether the contributing factor is indeed the problem, is to ask this question:

If this (contributing factor) changed . . . would the mismatch be resolved?

If the answer is "no," then it is a contributing factor, not the target problem.

If the answer is "yes," then the true target problem has been identified.

It is important to understand that educators may not have direct control of all contributing factors. For instance, the student's out-of-school life may be a contributing factor in the school learning situation, but the educator has no control over that.

Check all factors that you think may be contributing to the problem situation. These check marks should indicate specific items that you think need further analysis or change. Finally, consider the interaction of the factors you have identified.

Teacher Factors

- ☐ Attitude toward student
- ☐ Expectations of student performance
- ☐ Expertise to accomplish objectives
- ☐ Lesson plans
 - specification of instructional objectives
 - teaching methods
 - progression of instructional units
 - frequency of monitoring of student progress
 - provisions for feedback

Verbal Interactions and Reinforcement

- ☐ Teacher-student exchanges
 - focus of exchanges
 - involvement of all students regardless of the student's sex, race, or socio-economic status
 - encouragement to use higher-level thought processes
 - encouragement to pursue learning on student's own
 - encouragement to increase number and improve quality of student questions
- ☐ Feedback on student responses or questions, tests, and written assignments
 - accuracy
 - promptness
- ☐ Student-student exchanges
 - focus of exchanges
 - structure of exchanges

Classroom Factors

Time

- ☐ Amount of time assigned to this academic activity
- ☐ Amount of time during activity spent on management and discipline

Relationship between goals and content

- ☐ Definition of the scope and sequence of instruction in this area
- ☐ Definition of the goals and objectives of instruction in this area, unit, or activity
- ☐ Reinforcement of the previous instruction
- ☐ Foundation laid for subsequent instruction
- ☐ Reinforcement of critical skills in different content areas

Relationship between content and measures

- ☐ Relationship between content requirements and the kinds of measures used to assess student outcomes
- ☐ Relationship between stated goals and the instructional content
- ☐ Presentation of the concepts that will be measured
- ☐ Presentation of test item formats that might be used

Structuring of Classroom Activities

- ☐ Structural changes to fit specific academic and interpersonal goals
 - individual work (tutorial, set work, self-paced, self-selected)
 - group work (small group, large group, cooperative, competitive)

Student Placement

- ☐ Use of systematic procedures to assign students to instructional groups
 - use of multiple procedures (test performance data, teacher judgment, student recommendations, progress reports) to assign students to instructional groups
 - appropriateness of group placement

Classroom Control

- ☐ Definition of expectations for student behavior
- ☐ Consistency of evaluating students' behaviors
- ☐ Consistency of applying disciplinary actions
- ☐ Routines for handling student groups and transitions from group to group and activity to activity

Structure of Materials

- ☐ Instructional materials and activities
 - match to individual student's needs
 - inclusion of specific objectives
 - sequence of activities, assessments, and feedback to students
 - appropriateness for the student (according to age, environment, cultural heritage)
 - variety
 - attractiveness
 - diversity of techniques (audio tape, A-V material, concrete experience)

Classroom Environment

- ☐ Relationship between student's needs and physical setting and facilities

Student Factors**Task-Related Behavior**

- ☐ School attendance
- ☐ Asking and answering questions
- ☐ Attending behavior
- ☐ Classroom discussion
- ☐ Completing tasks
- ☐ Following directions
- ☐ Group activities
- ☐ Independent work
- ☐ On-task behavior
- ☐ Performing in front of others (oral reading, book report, speech, presentation, and so forth)
- ☐ Quality of work
- ☐ Other

Interpersonal Behavior

- ☐ Accepting authority
- ☐ Coping with conflict
- ☐ Gaining attention
- ☐ Greeting others
- ☐ Helping others
- ☐ Making conversation
- ☐ Organized play
- ☐ Positive attitude toward others
- ☐ Playing informally
- ☐ Property—own and other's
- ☐ Other

Self-Related Behavior

- ☐ Accepting consequences
- ☐ Ethical behavior
- ☐ Expressing feelings
- ☐ Positive attitude toward self
- ☐ Responsible behavior
- ☐ Self-care
- ☐ Other

Language Comprehension

- ☐ Listening to and understanding oral and written language
 - vocabulary
 - syntax (sentence structure)

Language Production

- ☐ Articulation problems
- ☐ Simple sentences
- ☐ Complex sentences

Language Function

- ☐ Asking questions
- ☐ Guessing information
- ☐ Engaging in conversation about specific academic tasks

Conceptual and Thinking Skills

- ☐ Requisites for the academic task
 - sorting
 - regrouping
 - time
 - space
 - sequencing
 - conserving
 - cause and effect
 - critical thinking

Academic Skills

- ☐ Requisites for reading task
 - Series _____
 - Grade level _____
- ☐ Requisites for mathematics task
 - Series _____
 - Grade level _____
- ☐ Requisites for the writing task
 - Grade level _____

Expectations for Teacher

- ☐ Match teacher expectations
- ☐ Do not match teacher expectations

Interest in Learning

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Not noticeable

Source: *Decisions: A Process for Screening Educational Problems in the Classroom*.
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1985.

Step 2: Independent Practice Activity

(Preparation for Homework)

Clarification of Mismatches

Asking Questions and Analyzing Contributing Factors

It is now time to take what you have learned about the PARTNERS problem-solving and decision-making process thus far and apply it to the practical situation from your own classroom that you previously identified.

Instructions

1. Working with your PARTNER(S), **review the concerns, expectations, matches, and mismatches** you identified in your last homework assignment. Rewrite the concern, expectations, and mismatches in the top section on the following Intervention Plan. You should refer to the following PARTNERS procedures (Step 2) throughout the meeting.
2. **Select** one or two **mismatches** to address: Which is the most important one to address?
3. **Brainstorm possible questions** regarding the mismatch(es) you have selected. You will want to write these on a separate sheet of paper.
4. Identify what you already know about the student. **Discuss where and how you can get any information** you do not already have to respond to the questions. Plan to collect this information. (You may be asked to limit your discussion about what you already know and complete this discussion later in order to allow your PARTNER(S) time to review their questions.)
5. Repeat for the student your PARTNER(S) has selected.

PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures



1. Classroom Teaching and Review



2. Problem Identification and Clarification (Meeting)

A. Share concerns

Ask: "How is the student failing to meet the general classroom goals and expectations?"

B. Clarify expectations and mismatches

Ask: "What are the most important points at which student performance or behavior and classroom expectations do not match?" "What does this particular student need to be successful?"

C. Select critical mismatches to address

Ask: "Given the student's strengths and weaknesses that you know of at this time, which concern(s) do you think are most critical as well as amenable to intervention?" "If you could resolve any of the concern, which would be most important to you?"

Write concern/mismatch(es) in specific terms

D. Ask questions to clarify mismatch(es)

Ask: "Do we need additional information before we can continue?"

E. Analyze contributing factors affecting the mismatch(es)

Ask: "Why might the mismatch be occurring?"
— student variables, classroom variables, teacher variables

F. Clarify the mismatch and expectations (if necessary)

Ask: "Do you wish to modify the target concern? Is the concern(s) one that can be addressed in the educational context?"



3. Intervention Planning (Meeting)

A. Identify Goal

Reverse the mismatch statement to a match statement

B. Brainstorm interventions to address concern(s) and meet goal

Classroom teacher selects best intervention(s) to try

Ask: "Which intervention(s) do you think will work?"

C. Develop implementation plan

Decide how and where the intervention will be implemented

Ask: "What will happen?" "What will the student be expected to do?"
"Who will implement what portions of the intervention?"

D. Determine how the intervention(s) will be monitored and evaluated

Ask: "How will you know if the intervention is working?" "What is the criteria for success?" "How long will you try the intervention before evaluating its success?" "How and when will monitoring take place?"



4. Implementation

A. Implement intervention according to plan

B. Collect observation and other data



5. Evaluation and Follow-up (Meeting)

A. Complete the follow-up and evaluate effectiveness of the intervention

B. Make decisions based on follow-up

Concern is resolved, return to Classroom Teaching and Review (Step 1)

Modify plan and continue interventions (Step 2D)

Make referral decision

Intervention Plan

Student: _____ **Grade/Class:** _____ **Date:** _____

Participants: _____

Concern: _____

Expectations

**Mismatch(es)
(*most important ones)**

**Analysis of
Contributing Factors**

Intervention Plan

Goal (expectation(s) to be met):

Intervention Ideas (star or number the one(s) selected to use)

Strategies (include what will happen, materials needed, who will do what, and where intervention(s) will occur)

Step 2: Independent Practice Activity

Homework

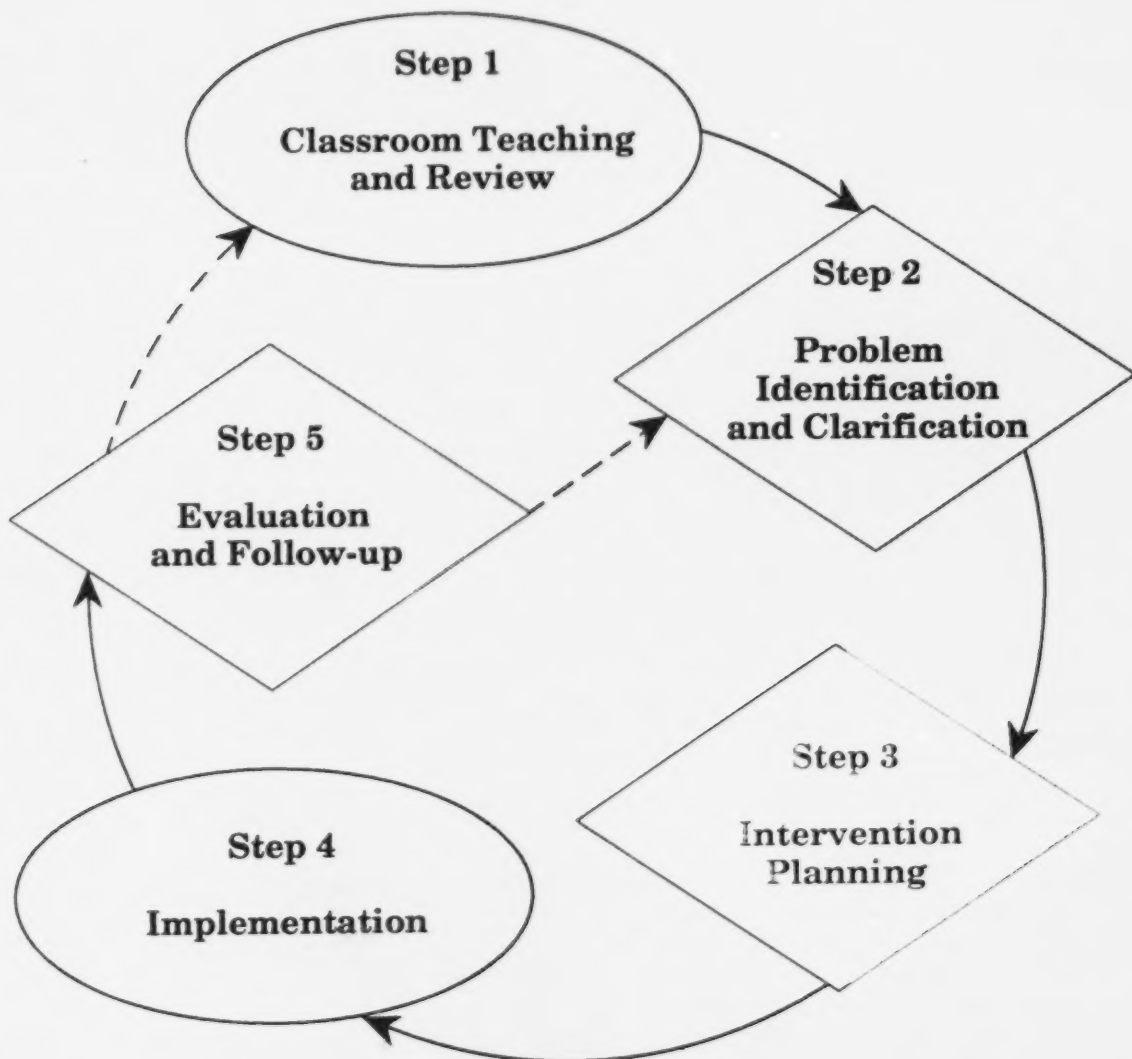
Clarification of Mismatches

Asking Questions and Analyzing Contributing Factors

Now that you have identified a critical mismatch(es) and brainstormed questions related to possible contributing factors, it is time to further clarify the mismatches by analyzing contributing factors. You will now complete the PARTNERS process through Step 2: Problem Identification and Clarification. You will continue to work on the preceding worksheet.

1. **Gather and compile** any needed information as discussed during the "preparation for homework" activity. Bring this information to your PARTNERS meeting.
2. **Answer the questions** you brainstormed about the mismatch(es) you selected to work on. **Share and analyze information/data collected with your PARTNER(S).** Note key points from your discussion in the column labeled "Analysis of Contributing Factors" on the worksheet provided.
3. Based on your analysis of the contributing factors, **clarify the mismatch(es).** Refer to the Check List for Mismatch Statements on page 36. Rewrite the mismatch(es) and concern if necessary.
4. Repeat the process for the student your PARTNER(S) has selected.

Intervention and Evaluation Planning



Introduction to Step 3

Once the concern or problem has been adequately identified and clarified, the next step is to develop the intervention and evaluation plan. This usually occurs at a second meeting when data relative to the identified problem are shared and possible intervention suggestions are brainstormed by the PARTNERS.

Reading

Intervention and Evaluation Planning

Before beginning to plan an intervention, it is necessary to review background, observation, and any other information gathered about contributing factors in response to questions asked about mismatches. Important information, including student strengths, weaknesses, and needs, should be written on your Intervention Plan on page 59 under the heading "Analysis of Contributing Factors." Pay particular attention to

- **Student Variables:** behavioral patterns, any specific precursors (antecedents) that prompt desirable or undesirable behavior, any responses (consequences) that prompt desirable behavior, preferred learning style, learning rate, skills mastered, skill deficits.
- **Classroom Variables:** influence of seating on student, student relationship with specific peers, need for and availability of specific materials.
- **Teacher Variables:** student responses to varied teaching methods and/or discipline strategies, appropriateness of expectations.

Before beginning the intervention plan, make sure you review and update, if necessary, the top section of the form completed earlier.

For the Intervention Plan

Goals should be related to the expectation(s) that should be met to resolve mismatch(es) and lessen the concern. Ask the following to check if your goal is workable.

- Is it student centered?
- If the goal was met, would the mismatch(es) be resolved and the concern eliminated or at least lessened?
- Is it possible to implement the goal in the educational setting? Is the goal specific enough to work on? Does it imply some specific action(s)?

Next, **Brainstorm Intervention Ideas** to address the goals and expectations. Remember, brainstorming means you are not limited by reality. You can evaluate the practicality of your ideas when you select one(s) to implement.

Select the intervention idea(s) that you think would be best to implement. The educator(s) who will be implementing the intervention(s) should have the final say in which to use.

Intervention Strategies needed to implement the intervention then should be developed that

- relate directly to the goal(s) identified;
- take into consideration student (and teacher) strengths, weaknesses, and needs (contributing factors);
- have the potential for being successful; and
- can be defined clearly enough so an outside person could understand what needs to be done, where it should be implemented, and who should implement each of the strategies and activities identified.

Evaluation Planning

Evaluation is perhaps the most critical, and unfortunately the most neglected, part of any intervention. Too often, educators abandon potentially successful, or maintain unsuccessful, educational strategies simply because they have failed to plan for and engage in adequate monitoring. The decision to continue, modify, or discontinue an intervention must be based on specific information about student progress, rather than from a "gut feeling" (see Rationale for Problem Solving on pages 16-17).

While it is not expected that an educator spend a lot of time gathering complicated data, it is important that the PARTNERS help clarify what to look for and how to identify if the goal(s) of the intervention have been met.

Careful and ongoing evaluation will help the educators involved in the PARTNERS process determine whether an intervention is successful and to what degree. Evaluation data is used to help reclarify the concern, expectations, matches, and mismatches when, and if, the PARTNERS decide to return to Problem Clarification and resume the process.

When planning to evaluate an intervention, the following should be identified *prior* to implementing the intervention and noted on the form.

1. What will be the **criteria for success**? What specifically will you want to see or hear if the intervention is to be considered successful? This may be similar to your goal; however, you must be certain that you specify to what degree (accuracy, proficiency, quality) you want the goal realized. You may want to identify interim steps to the goal as part of your criteria.
2. What **evaluation methods** will be used to monitor progress? What kind of data or other information will you need? How will you gather and maintain records of student progress toward meeting the intervention goal? How frequently will information be collected?
3. Is there a need for **ongoing communication** with others to discuss progress, share information, or engage in planning? This will be necessary if more than one educator is involved in implementing the intervention. Examples might include shared daily or weekly check sheets, brief weekly meetings, and shared planning times.
4. Finally, a **date** should be set for **reviewing the success of the plan**. Usually four to 12 weeks is most appropriate, but the time frame will depend on the particular intervention and the degree of change expected.

For Further Thought

1. What can the PARTNERS do to make sure that the educator(s) who will be implementing the intervention plan feels comfortable with the selected strategies?

2. Usually when working with a group, numerous intervention ideas will be generated. However, occasionally the group will feel that they can't brainstorm an intervention that will be successful. If you were in this situation, what would you do?

3. What evaluation methods for monitoring academic and behavioral progress can you think of that could be easily applied in the classroom?

4. Now that you have gone through the entire process, why do you think it is important to spend so much time on problem identification and clarification prior to intervention planning?

5. How do you use evaluation to make decisions about maintaining, dropping, or modifying an intervention?
 - a. When would you decide to drop the intervention altogether?

 - b. How would you decide what parts of the intervention plan worked?

 - c. At what point would you decide to make a referral?

Step 3: Brainstorming Activity

Interventions

Given the following concerns, brainstorm interventions you have used that have been successful. You may assume any contributing factors — try to think of specific students who have exhibited such mismatches.

1. The student can not write responses to comprehension questions independently.
2. The student does not seem able to read the social studies text independently.
3. The student fails objective tests.
4. The student can not stay seated for the entire period.
5. The student disrupts others during independent work by talking to them and poking them.
6. The student refuses to do homework and independent assignments.
7. The student does not follow oral instructions and does not seem to listen when the teacher gives them.

Activity

Step 3: Guided Practice Activity

Selecting Interventions

Given the following mismatches, contributing factors, and list of intervention ideas, discuss in your group which intervention strategy(ies) you think would be best to use as the basis for developing an intervention plan for the student and why. Use the worksheet on page 68.

Example

Example#1 First grade reading class

Expectations

Will participate in reading group
Will recall sight words in context
Will complete reading workbook independently with 85 percent accuracy

Mismatches

* Most Important One(s)

* Can't recall sight words in context or lists
Doesn't volunteer. When called on, whispers; seems afraid to make mistakes
Low accuracy on oral and written work (30 percent to 65 percent)
Asks for constant help with written work

Analysis of

Contributing Factors

Knows all consonant sounds. Confuses short vowel sounds.
Uses initial sounds only to decode words
Read five of 20 sight words from basal list. Remembers words once mastered
In lowest reading group for grade—two other students also doing poorly
Does best when visuals presented with words. Works best in small groups and one to one
Gets frustrated easily with written work—rips up work when makes errors
No medical problems. Minor articulation deficit
Very shy, has few friends

Intervention Ideas

- Move student into Kindergarten for reading readiness
- Provide individual/smaller group instruction for practice on sight vocabulary and phonics
- Have student work with a peer tutor
- Reward student for workbook completed with 85 percent accuracy or better with stars
- Make picture/sight word flashcards—keep track of sight words mastered
- Send student for speech therapy
- Provide written work at an easier level—do not use basal workbook
- Refer student for LD evaluation
- Give student three "help slips" per independent work session. Student can only ask for help three times.

Example#2 Middle or secondary school student

Example

Expectations

Student will turn in homework on time—usually the day after it is assigned

Homework will be completed neatly and accurately

80 percent minimum for objective-type worksheets

Logical answers written in complete sentences for prose responses

Mismatches

* Most Important One(s)

* Student does not turn in homework on a regular basis (50 percent done)

Family does not help student with homework

* Homework that is turned in is often messy and only partially done

When reminded to complete homework, student becomes disrespectful and yells at teachers

Analysis of Contributing Factors

Student demonstrates ability to complete assignments—in-class work is accurate, although not neat

Has difficulty completing in-class work on time

Grades do not seem to be motivating. Student notes the only thing wanted is not to have homework

Parents do not feel it is their role to force their child to do homework

Student works best in quiet room when provided gentle encouragement

Student responds to threats and harsh punishment with verbally aggressive behavior and school avoidance (leaves class)

Student is cooperative in one to one situation with teacher

Intervention Ideas

- Have family come in for conference. Set up a home program where parents reward/punish student for homework completion or lack of it
- Reward student for completed homework in school with desired activity (for example, one night of homework off for eight assignments complete and accurate [80 percent] in a row)
- Provide time for student to complete homework in school—schedule a study hall last period Monday through Thursday for the student
- Provide some time in each class for the student to begin homework
- Have student serve detention whenever homework is not completed
- Provide student with an assignment book
- Have each teacher check the student's assignment book daily and check off when assignments done to expectation
- Reduce student's daily grade one step when homework is not completed
- Have one teacher serve as a "support" for the student—meet with the student daily to discuss how things are going
- Have the student and family see the guidance counselor to discuss family issues

Worksheet – Evaluation Methods

For the intervention strategy(ies) you selected in the previous activity, brainstorm ways you can monitor the intervention(s) and determine if the student has made progress toward meeting the expectations noted.

Example #1

Intervention(s) Selected:

Evaluation Strategies:

Example #2

Intervention(s) Selected:

Evaluation Strategies:

Step 3: Guided Practice Activity

Intervention Planning: Video Vignette

Now that you have gone over the entire PARTNERS process, you are ready to plan an intervention. You will be using the same video simulation you worked with in the section on "Analyzing Contributing Factors." Refer to the PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures (Appendix F) as you are completing the following Intervention Plan.

1. Take out the worksheet you used when you first viewed the video on page 52. Your facilitator may give you the opportunity to view the video again.
2. Working with your PARTNER(S), **review the concern, expectations, and mismatch(es)** you've selected to work on first, as well as the Analysis of Contributing Factors you completed previously. Transfer information to the following Intervention Plan.
3. Continuing to work on the Intervention Plan, **brainstorm intervention ideas** related to the concern. (Remember that while brainstorming, anything goes — all ideas should be accepted, no critiquing—see Appendix B—Guidelines for Brainstorming).
4. **Select the "best" intervention(s)** to use.
5. **Develop the intervention plan**
 - a. identify the goal
 - b. specify intervention strategies
 - c. develop the evaluation plan
 - criteria
 - evaluation methods
 - provisions for ongoing communication, if needed
 - timeline for evaluation
6. Attach any special monitoring devices or other forms that will be used as they are developed.

Intervention Plan

Student: _____ **Grade/Class:** _____ **Date:** _____

Participants: _____

Concern: _____

Expectations

Mismatch(es)
(*most important ones)

Analysis of
Contributing Factors

Intervention Plan

Goal (expectation(s) to be met):

Intervention Ideas (star or number the one(s) selected to use)

Strategies (include what will happen, materials needed, who will do what, and where intervention(s) will occur)

Evaluation Plan

Description of criteria for success (how will you know if goal has been met?):

Evaluation method(s) to be used (charting, graphs, tests). Include how often student progress will be monitored:

If more than one teacher is involved, how and when will ongoing communication occur?

When do you anticipate reviewing the overall success of the intervention plan? (document follow-up on the Intervention Follow-up.) _____
(date)

Please attach any special monitoring devices, behavior management plans, student contracts, and so forth that will be used.

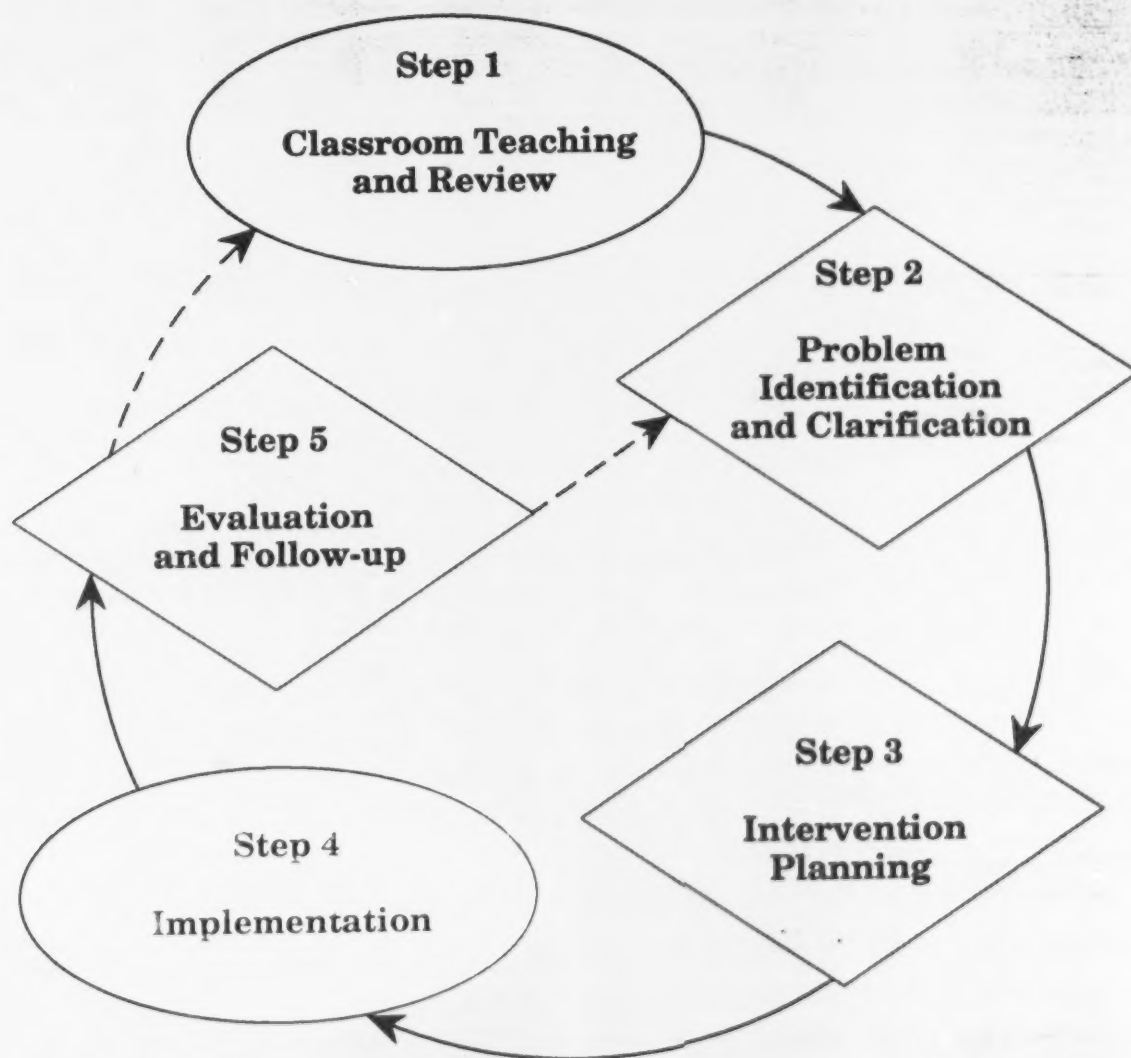
Activity

Step 3: Independent Practice Activity

Intervention Planning: Your Classroom/Student

Now that you have gone over the entire PARTNERS process, you are ready to plan an intervention for the student you have selected to work with from your classroom. You should refer to the PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures (Appendix F) as you are completing the Intervention Plan.

1. **Refer** to your Intervention Plan.
2. Working with your PARTNER(S), **review the concern and mismatch(es)** you've selected to work on first, as well as the Analysis of Contributing Factors you completed in your last assignment.
3. Continuing to work on the Intervention Plan, **brainstorm intervention ideas** related to the concern. (Refer to Appendix B—Guidelines for Brainstorming).
4. **Select the “best” intervention(s)** to use. The teacher(s) who will be implementing the intervention should have the final choice.
5. Develop the **intervention plan**
 - a. identify the goal
 - b. specify intervention strategies
 - c. develop the evaluation plan
 - criteria
 - evaluation methods
 - provisions for ongoing communication, if needed
 - timeline for evaluation
6. Attach any special monitoring devices or other forms that will be used.



Introduction to Step 4

Implementation of the intervention follows the development of the PARTNERS intervention plan. During implementation, the following occur:

- Instructional, behavioral, and other interventions are implemented according to the intervention plan.
- On-going data is collected on student performance and behavior relevant to the intervention as identified in the evaluation planning portion of the intervention plan.
- Communication between teachers implementing the plan is carried out as identified on the intervention plan.

Implementation continues up to the time when the PARTNERS reconvene to evaluate or follow-up on progress toward meeting the goal(s) identified during Intervention and Evaluation Planning (Step 3).

Step 4: Independent Practice Activity

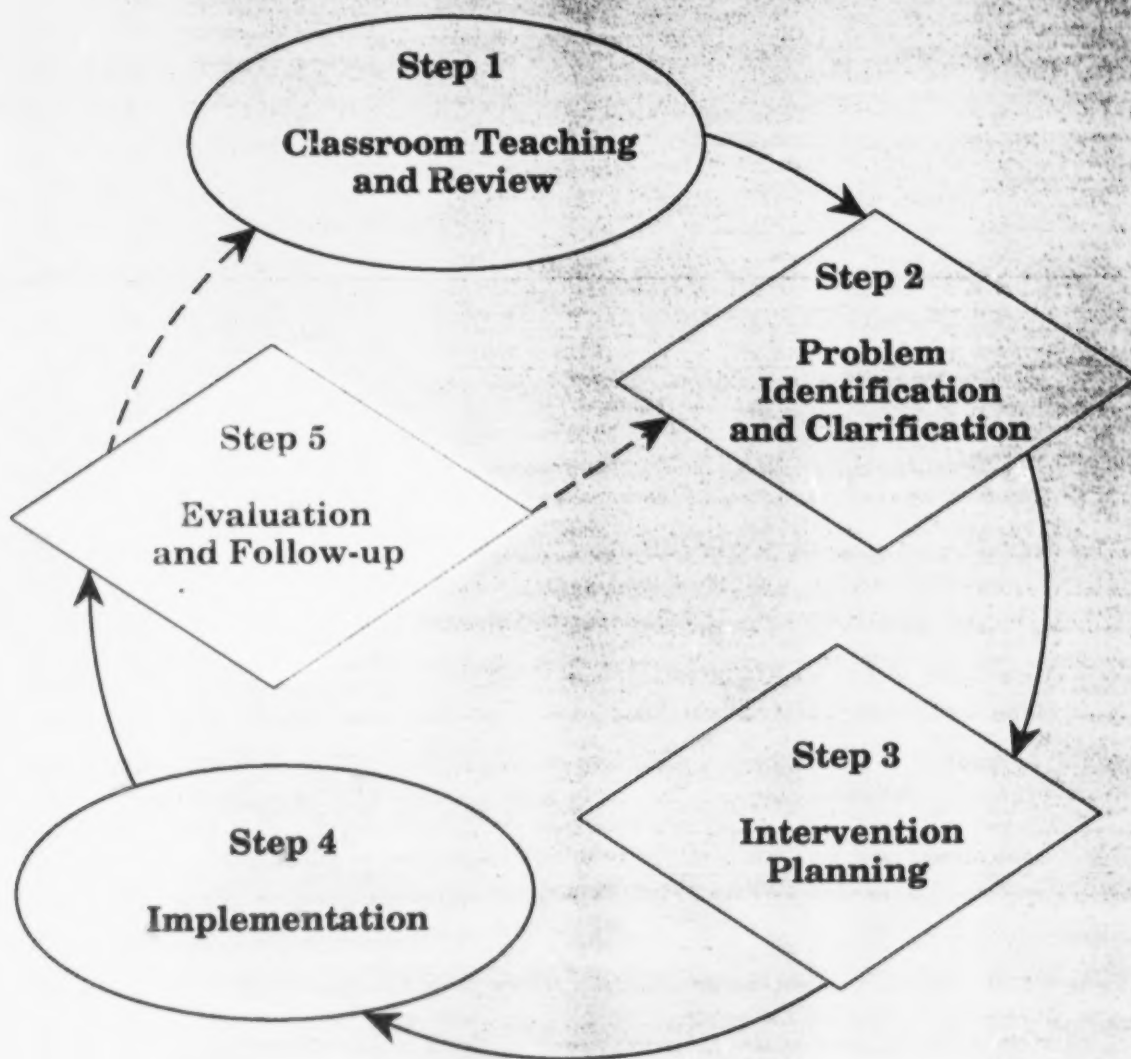
Implementation and Collection of Evaluation Information

Now that you and your PARTNER(S) have developed an intervention and evaluation plan, you are ready to implement the intervention with the student you selected.

Go back to your classroom(s) and implement the intervention according to the plan. Remember to collect the on-going evaluation information as identified in the evaluation section of the intervention plan. This information will be extremely important when it becomes time to evaluate the success of the intervention.

If you feel you need to talk to your PARTNER(S) before the time designated to evaluate the plan, schedule a meeting with them. They should be happy to provide any additional support you may need. Remember that it may take a few weeks before you will be able to tell if the intervention you developed will work with the student.

Evaluation and Follow-up



Introduction to Step 5

Follow-up of any intervention plan developed by the PARTNERS is a critical decision point. It is only during the follow-up that the PARTNERS can truly determine the success of an intervention. This step answers the following questions:

1. Have we met our intervention goal(s) (have the mismatches been resolved)? To what degree have our goal(s) been met?
2. How do we know that we have met our goal(s)?
3. Have we learned anything new about the situation in the process of implementation and data gathering? Do we now know what techniques might work best with this student? Are we now aware of other important contributing factors to mismatch(es)?
4. If our goal(s) have not been met, what should we do now?

Reading

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Scheduling the Evaluation (Follow-up) Meeting

A date for conducting a follow-up meeting always should be set as part of the Intervention and Evaluation Planning process (Step 3). Enough time should be given to allow the student to succeed at the intervention. It is important to remember that it often takes a bit of time before a student "catches on." Unless an intervention is dramatically failing, it should be continued for a portion of time. Depending upon the complexity of the intervention and the degree of change expected, four to 12 weeks is generally a reasonable amount of time to implement an intervention before conducting a follow-up meeting.

Conducting the Meeting

The PARTNERS who participated in developing the intervention plan should participate in the follow-up meeting. Observation and other data collected as identified in the intervention plan should be shared. The teacher(s) who implemented the intervention also should provide a brief description of how the student responded. Utilizing this information, the PARTNERS then evaluate the following:

1. To what degree did the student meet the identified criteria for success (accomplish the goal of the intervention plan)?
2. If the student did not meet criteria fully, is it likely that the student will meet criteria if the intervention is continued?
3. Were some portions of the intervention more successful than others?

Decisions Made as a Result of Evaluating Interventions

After discussing the previous three items, the PARTNERS should make a decision regarding the intervention. Any of the following decisions might be made as a result of evaluating the intervention. All decisions should be documented. A sample Intervention Follow-up is on page 81.

- If the intervention is deemed successful, the PARTNERS may decide to continue the intervention, modify it, or set new criteria. The educator(s) then return to Classroom Teaching and Review—Step 1.
- If the intervention was not successful, or only partially successful, the PARTNERS should look beyond simple meeting of criteria and discuss what might have led to the outcome (analyze contributing factors). The PARTNERS should then discuss what would need to be changed in order for the mismatch(es) to be resolved? Was the goal realistic? Were the strategies appropriate? Does the student need more time to be engaged in the new intervention? The PARTNERS may return to Problem Identification and Clarification—Step 2—adding the information gained to the list of contributing factors and modifying the intervention plan accordingly.
- The PARTNERS may decide that additional resources are needed and may decide to pursue these. A referral for Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) or non-EEN services may be made. Once this is done, the PARTNERS still should continue the process by returning to Problem Identification and Clarification—Step 2. When a referral is made, the PARTNERS group will get new information and may add or change members, but it will continue to be important to plan for the student. During the EEN evaluation, the student will remain in the current program. If the student is found to be EEN, that student (and the concern the teacher had for the student) may remain in the regular education program. Ongoing planning and collaboration among educators will be critical. Note Exceptional Education Needs Referral Procedures in Appendix G.

Activity

Step 5: Guided Practice Activity

Evaluating Interventions and Follow-up

Now that you have implemented the intervention and have collected data as identified in your intervention and evaluation plan, you are ready to assess whether the intervention was successful.

Before you begin this activity you will need the following:

- Intervention Plan
- Any data collected as identified in the Evaluation Plan
- Intervention Follow-up

1. With your PARTNERS, first **review** the **goals** of the intervention and the **criteria** for success that had been identified in your intervention and evaluation plan. You will be taking notes on the following Intervention Follow-up.
2. Give a brief overview of the course of implementation. Then **share evaluation data**. Summarize progress in the "Comments" column on the Intervention Follow-up.
3. If the student did not meet criteria, spend some time discussing why. You may wish to note additional comments in the section marked "Other Comments" on the Intervention Follow-up.
4. **Make a decision** about where to go from here.
 - a. Will you continue the intervention as planned?
 - b. Will you modify the intervention in any way?
 - c. Will you select a new goal or criteria (clarify expectations)?
 - d. Do you wish to select another concern or mismatch to address?
 - e. Will you seek additional resources or make a referral for non-EEN or EEN services (if you select this choice, you will still want to identify what you will do with this student in the meantime)?
 - f. Will you return the student to Classroom Teaching and Review—Step 1—and monitor progress?
5. Document decisions and any changes made in the intervention plan on the Intervention Follow-up. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Intervention Follow-up

Date

Participants

Intervention Strategy
(see Intervention Plan)

Comments

Other Comments

Modifications or New Intervention Activities

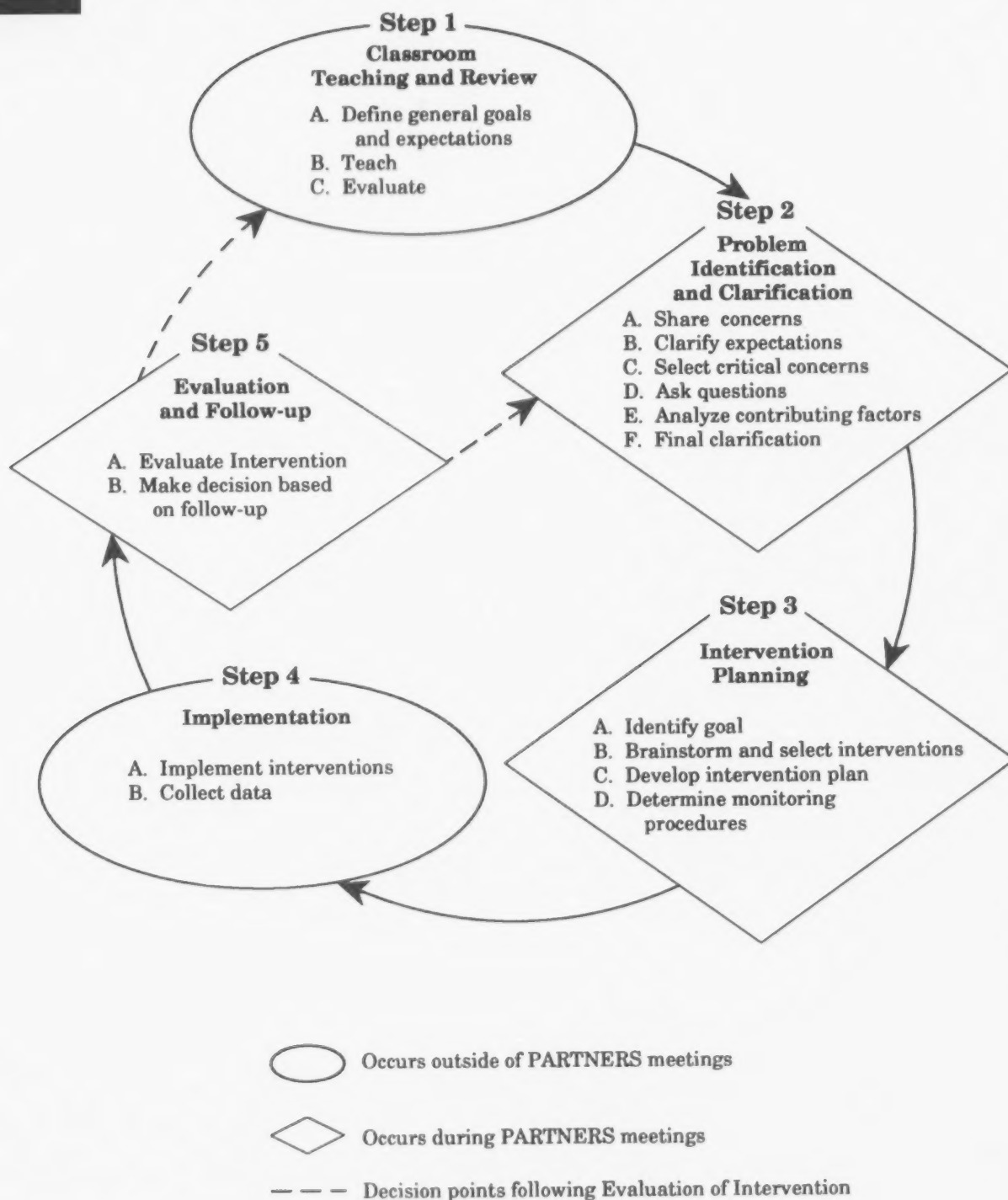
Date Begun

Description of Modified Intervention Activities

Appendixes

- A. The PARTNERS in Problem Solving Process Graphic*
- B. Guidelines for Brainstorming and Group Voting*
- C. Check List for Mismatch Statements*
- D. List of Contributing Factors*
- E. Intervention Plan*
- F. PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures*
- G. Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) Referral, Evaluation,
and Placement Process*
- H. Glossary*
- I. Annotated List of Resource Materials*

PARTNERS in Problem Solving Process



Guidelines for Brainstorming and Group Voting

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a way of bringing out each person's creative ideas quickly and effectively. Here are several suggestions for making brainstorming effective.

- Go around the group in a circle, each person giving one idea.
- Repeat until all ideas are exhausted.
- If you have no idea, simply pass.
- Expanding on others' ideas is encouraged.
- List as many ideas as possible.
- Absolutely no criticism of an idea is allowed. Criticism stifles creativity.
- Ideas can be as crazy and extravagant as possible. You will evaluate them later through modified voting.
- Clarification may be sought.
- Move as quickly as possible. Be brief when stating an idea.
- Set a time limit. People brainstorm better under pressure.

Group Voting

Group voting is a way of helping the group efficiently decide which ideas are going to be adopted. This is the stage where you analyze, criticize, and judge the worth of the ideas you have come up with as a group during brainstorming.

First, you must identify the criteria or goals that must be considered in your deliberation on each alternative. In this case the criteria for classroom interventions may consist of the following:

- high probability that you (the teacher) will implement the alternative
- the amount of work required to carry out the idea is reasonable
- high probability that the idea will lead to a successful resolution of the problem
- the intervention best solves the problem and minimizes the creation of new problems, given the constraints in this situation

Check List for Mismatch Statements

- ☐ **If the mismatch was resolved, would the student meet the academic or behavior expectations? Would the concern be significantly reduced?**
Would resolving the mismatch significantly improve the situation—would it make the student's performance or behavior acceptable?
- ☐ **Is the mismatch student centered?**
Is it written as something the *student* is or is not doing?
- ☐ **Can the mismatch be addressed in the educational environment?**
 - a. Can potential interventions be implemented in the class or school environment?
 - b. Will school personnel be able to monitor progress toward resolving the mismatch?
- ☐ **Do all members of the team agree that this is a critical mismatch?**
- ☐ **Do all members of the team agree on the definition of the mismatch as it is stated?**
Do all agree that the mismatch means the same thing?

List of Contributing Factors

Appendix D

Teacher Factors

- ☐ Attitude toward student
- ☐ Expectations of student performance
- ☐ Expertise to accomplish objectives
- ☐ Lesson plans
 - specification of instructional objectives
 - teaching methods
 - progression of instructional units
 - frequency of monitoring of student progress
 - provisions for feedback

Verbal Interactions and Reinforcement

- ☐ Teacher-student exchanges
 - focus of exchanges
 - involvement of all students regardless of the student's sex, race, or socio-economic status
 - encouragement to use higher-level thought processes
 - encouragement to pursue learning on student's own
 - encouragement to increase number and improve quality of student questions
- ☐ Feedback on student responses or questions, tests, and written assignments
 - accuracy
 - promptness
- ☐ Student-student exchanges
 - focus of exchanges
 - structure of exchanges

Classroom Factors

Time

- ☐ Amount of time assigned to this academic activity
- ☐ Amount of time during activity spent on management and discipline

Relationship between goals and content

- ☐ Definition of the scope and sequence of instruction in this area
- ☐ Definition of the goals and objectives of instruction in this area, unit, or activity
- ☐ Reinforcement of the previous instruction
- ☐ Foundation laid for subsequent instruction
- ☐ Reinforcement of critical skills in different content areas

Relationship between content and measures

- ☐ Relationship between content requirements and the kinds of measures used to assess student outcomes
- ☐ Relationship between stated goals and the instructional content

- ☐ Presentation of the concepts that will be measured
- ☐ Presentation of test item formats that might be used

Structuring of Classroom Activities

- ☐ Structural changes to fit specific academic and interpersonal goals
 - individual work (tutorial, set work, self-paced, self-selected)
 - group work (small group, large group, cooperative, competitive)

Student Placement

- ☐ Use of systematic procedures to assign students to instructional groups
 - use of multiple procedures (test performance data, teacher judgment, student recommendations, progress reports) to assign students to instructional groups
 - appropriateness of group placement

Classroom Control

- ☐ Definition of expectations for student behavior
- ☐ Consistency of evaluating students' behaviors
- ☐ Consistency of applying disciplinary actions
- ☐ Routines for handling student groups and transitions from group to group and activity to activity

Structure of Materials

- ☐ Instructional materials and activities
 - match to individual student's needs
 - inclusion of specific objectives
 - sequence of activities, assessments, and feedback to students
 - appropriateness for the student (according to age, environment, cultural heritage)
 - variety
 - attractiveness
 - diversity of techniques (audio tape, A-V material, concrete experience)

Classroom Environment

- ☐ Relationship between student's needs and physical setting and facilities

Student Factors

Task-Related Behavior

- ☐ School attendance
- ☐ Asking and answering questions
- ☐ Attending behavior
- ☐ Classroom discussion
- ☐ Completing tasks
- ☐ Following directions
- ☐ Group activities
- ☐ Independent work

- ☐ On-task behavior
- ☐ Performing in front of others (oral reading, book report, speech, presentation, and so forth)
- ☐ Quality of work
- ☐ Other

Interpersonal Behavior

- ☐ Accepting authority
- ☐ Coping with conflict
- ☐ Gaining attention
- ☐ Greeting others
- ☐ Helping others
- ☐ Making conversation
- ☐ Organized play
- ☐ Positive attitude toward others
- ☐ Playing informally
- ☐ Property—own and other's
- ☐ Other

Self-Related Behavior

- ☐ Accepting consequences
- ☐ Ethical behavior
- ☐ Expressing feelings
- ☐ Positive attitude toward self
- ☐ Responsible behavior
- ☐ Self-care
- ☐ Other

Language Comprehension

- ☐ Listening to and understanding oral and written language
 - vocabulary
 - syntax (sentence structure)

Language Production

- ☐ Articulation problems
- ☐ Simple sentences
- ☐ Complex sentences

Language Function

- ☐ Asking questions
- ☐ Guessing information
- ☐ Engaging in conversation about specific academic tasks

Conceptual and Thinking Skills

- ☐ Requisites for the academic task
 - sorting
 - regrouping
 - time
 - space
 - sequencing
 - conserving
 - cause and effect
 - critical thinking

Academic Skills

- ☐ Requisites for reading task
 - Series _____
 - Grade level _____
- ☐ Requisites for mathematics task
 - Series _____
 - Grade level _____
- ☐ Requisites for the writing task
 - Grade level _____

Expectations for Teacher

- ☐ Match teacher expectations
- ☐ Do not match teacher expectations

Interest in Learning

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Uncertain
- ☐ Not noticeable

Source: *Decisions: A Process for Screening Educational Problems in the Classroom*.
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1985.

Intervention Plan

Appendix E

Student: _____ Grade/Class: _____ Date: _____

Participants: _____

Concern: _____

Expectations

Mismatch(es)
(*most important ones)

Analysis of
Contributing Factors

Intervention Plan

Goal (expectation(s) to be met):

Intervention Ideas (star or number the one(s) selected to use)

Strategies (include what will happen, materials needed, who will do what, and where intervention(s) will occur)

Evaluation Plan

Description of criteria for success (how will you know if goal has been met?):

Evaluation method(s) to be use (charting, graphs, tests). Include how often student progress will be monitored:

If more than one teacher is involved, how and when will ongoing communication occur?

When do you anticipate reviewing the overall success of the intervention plan? (document follow-up on the Intervention Follow-up.) _____
(date)

Please attach any special monitoring devices, behavior management plans, student contracts, and so forth that will be used.

Intervention Follow-up

Date

Participants

Intervention Strategy
(see Intervention Plan)

Comments

Other Comments

Modifications or New Intervention Activities

Date Begun

Description of Modified Intervention Activities

PARTNERS in Problem Solving Procedures

Appendix F



1. Classroom Teaching and Review



2. Problem Identification and Clarification (Meeting)

A. Share concerns

Ask: "How is the student failing to meet the general classroom goals and expectations?"

B. Clarify expectations and mismatches

Ask: "What are the most important points at which student performance or behavior and classroom expectations do not match?" "What does this particular student need to be successful?"

C. Select critical mismatches to address

Ask: "Given the student's strengths and weaknesses that you know of at this time, which concern(s) do you think are most critical as well as amenable to intervention?" "If you could resolve any of the concern, which would be most important to you?"

Write concern/mismatch(es) in specific terms

D. Ask questions to clarify mismatch(es)

Ask: "Do we need additional information before we can continue?"

E. Analyze contributing factors affecting the mismatch(es)

Ask: "Why might the mismatch be occurring?"
— student variables, classroom variables, teacher variables

F. Clarify the mismatch and expectations (if necessary)

Ask: "Do you wish to modify the target concern? Is the concern(s) one that can be addressed in the educational context?"



3. Intervention Planning (Meeting)

A. Identify Goal

Reverse the mismatch statement to a match statement

B. Brainstorm interventions to address concern(s) and meet goal

Classroom teacher selects best intervention(s) to try

Ask: "Which intervention(s) do you think will work?"

C. Develop implementation plan

Decide how and where the intervention will be implemented

Ask: "What will happen?" "What will the student be expected to do?"
"Who will implement what portions of the intervention?"

D. Determine how the intervention(s) will be monitored and evaluated

Ask: "How will you know if the intervention is working?" "What is the criteria for success?" "How long will you try the intervention before evaluating its success?" "How and when will monitoring take place?"



4. Implementation

A. Implement intervention according to plan

B. Collect observation and other data



5. Evaluation and Follow-up (Meeting)

A. Complete the follow-up and evaluate effectiveness of the intervention

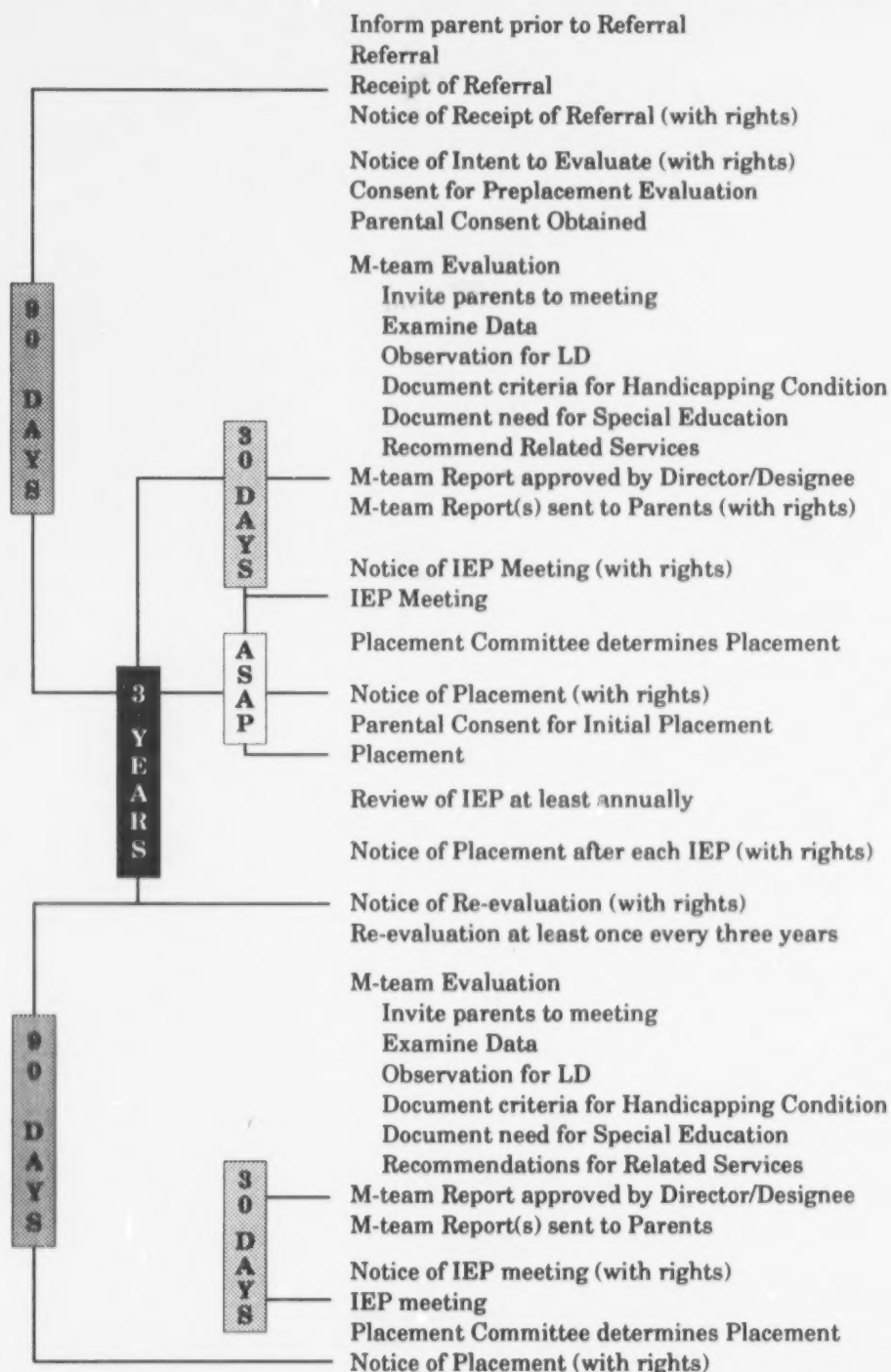
B. Make decisions based on follow-up

Concern is resolved, return to Classroom Teaching and Review (Step 1)

Modify plan and continue interventions (Step 2D)

Make referral decision

Exceptional Education Needs (EEN) Referral, Evaluation, and Placement Process



October 1991

Glossary

Appendix H

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Behavior	activity, conduct, performance, or mannerisms displayed by a student that are observable and measurable.
Consequence	that which logically or naturally follows an action or condition; an effect; result.
Collaboration	a way of working with people where, together, they agree to achieve long term, often complex, goals. It requires sensitivity to the ideas and feelings of other people.
Discrepancy	an instance of divergence or disagreement, as between facts or claims; inconsistency; a difference between what is and what should be.
EEN	Exceptional Educational Need — "a mental, physical, emotional, or learning disability which, if the full potential of the child is to be attained, requires services to the student to supplement or replace regular education." (Chapter 115 of Wisconsin Statutes).
Environment	all the conditions, circumstances, and influences surrounding and effecting the development of a child.
Expectations	something considered likely or certain; something considered obligatory or something required; a set of values or standards for student behavior and performance held by others. Explicit expectation is a direct and definite expression of expectations; clearly defined and specified. Implicit expectation is implied, understood, although not directly expressed; contained in the nature of something.
Follow-up	a procedure to monitor the effectiveness of educational interventions.
Inference	a theory or hypothesis assumed to account for what is not understood; used as a basis for further action.
Individualized Instructional Program	providing a personalized set of learning experiences. Teacher is responsible for diagnosing, prescribing for, and guiding each student through the learning process. Can be through one-to-one, small-group, or large-group activities.

Intervention	an instructional/behavioral action taken when a planned learning activity is judged to be ineffective for helping a student achieve a desired level of competency. It is tailored to the individual needs of the student.
Match	student performance and behavior that is compatible with the expectations of others who constitute a given learning environment.
Mismatch	student performance and behavior that is not compatible with the expectations of others who constitute a given learning environment.
Performance	the act of fulfilling an obligation or requirement; final action or result of a specific behavior interaction.
Problem-Solving Team	a group of teachers and others organized to assist their colleagues in resolving educational problems; also known as a Teacher Assistance Team, Building Assistance Team, Intervention Assistance Team.
Reinforcement	the process of using a stimulus to strengthen or reduce a behavioral response.
Screening	a system of collecting and reviewing information about individuals in order to identify those who may be exceptional.
Target Concern	a specific student behavior selected for further appraisal or change.

Annotated List of Resource Materials

Appendix I

Bowman, Jan E. "When Is Intervention an Ounce of Prevention? Reconceptualizing the Prereferral Intervention Process." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association. Washington, DC, April 1987. The paper raises concerns about current intervention practices used with children who, while not handicapped, have academic or behavioral problems and who may be labeled handicapped. The paper suggests the need to examine notions about interventions and to see prereferral interventions as a series of preventive interventions. The paper concludes by calling on practitioners to implement and evaluate preventive interventions before students are referred.

Carter Jane, and George Sugai. "Survey on Prereferral Practices: Responses from State Departments of Education." *Exceptional Children* 55.4 (1989), pp. 298-302. A survey of 49 state directors of special education found that prereferral interventions for students suspected of having a handicap were required or recommended by most states. Also determined were types of interventions frequently used, professionals responsible for designing and implementing the interventions, and the interventions' effectiveness.

Conoley, Jane Close, and Collie W. Conoley. "Useful Theories in School-Based Consultation." *Remedial and Special Education* 9.6 (1988), pp. 14-20. Mental health, behavioral, and process consultation models are described as three theoretical approaches to the practice of school-based consultation. An ecological model of consultation is offered as a conceptual umbrella for planning entry, assessment, intervention, and evaluation activities with handicapped students.

Council for Exceptional Children. *Prereferral Interventions for Students with Learning and Behavior Problems*. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 1989. Seventy-seven references from the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database and the Exceptional Child Education Resources database are presented on the topic of prereferral interventions for students with learning and behavior problems. In addition to the references, the texts of four background publications are offered, including *Prereferral Intervention: Using Mainstream Assistance Teams to Accommodate Difficult-to-Teach Students in General Education*, *Implementing a Prereferral Intervention System: Part I. The Model*, *Implementing a Prereferral Intervention System: Part II. The Data*, and *Survey on Prereferral Practices: Responses from State Departments of Education*.

Fuchs, Douglas, and Lynn S. Fuchs. *Mainstream Assistance Teams to Accommodate Difficult-to-Teach Students in General Education*. Nashville, TN: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1987.

Fuchs, Douglas. *Prereferral Intervention for Difficult-to-Teach Students: Mainstream Assistance Teams - Years 1 and 2*. Nashville, TN: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1987. The Mainstream Assistance Team (MAT) Project is a three-year program to develop, implement, and validate a prereferral intervention model with nonhandicapped difficult-to-teach students. This paper presents a rationale for prereferral assessment and intervention. Traditional educational assessment is

compared to prereferral assessment and intervention. The basic dimensions of the MAT are explained, including behavioral consultation in four stages (problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and problem evaluation).

Fuchs, Douglas, et al. *Prereferral Intervention Through Teacher Consultation: Mainstream Assistance Teams*. Nashville, TN: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1989. A three-year project is described in which Mainstream Assistance Teams offer consultation services to teachers in elementary and middle schools. The consultation results in interventions that are prescriptive, student-directed, and designed to transfer to additional school settings. Step-by-step procedures in designing and implementing prereferral interventions are discussed.

Fuchs, Douglas, et al. "Prereferral Intervention Through Teacher Consultation: Mainstream Assistance Teams." *Academic Therapy* 25.3 (1990), pp. 263-276. The article describes the Mainstream Assistance Teams Projects in elementary and middle schools which involved prereferral intervention embedded within a larger process of teacher consultation to better accommodate difficult-to-teach pupils in regular classrooms.

Graden, Janet L., et al. "Implementing a Prereferral Intervention System: Part I. The Model." *Exceptional Children* 51.5 (1985), pp. 377-384. The article addresses implementing a prereferral intervention model as the first step in special education services delivery system. The model includes four prereferral stages (request for consultation, consultation, observation, conference) and two referral stages (formal referral and program meeting).

Graden, Janet L., et al. "Implementing a Prereferral Intervention System: Part II. The Data." *Exceptional Children* 51.6 (1985), pp. 487-496. The implementation of a prereferral model is described and data are presented. Issues in implementation, including school system variables and barriers to implementing a consultation model, also are discussed.

Graden, Janet L. "Redefining 'Prereferral' Intervention as Intervention Assistance: Collaboration between General and Special Education." *Exceptional Children* 56.3 (1989), pp. 227-231. The articles stress such concepts of prereferral intervention for at-risk students as intervention assistance and alternative intervention. Such approaches are founded on collaborative consultation between special and general educators.

Hayek, Robert A. "The Teacher Assistance Team: A Pre-Referral Support System." *Focus on Exceptional Children* 20.1 (1987), pp. 1-7. Use of building-level Teachers Assistance Teams (TATs) to provide suggested alternative instructional strategies and support services to regular teachers with problem learners prior to referral to special education is discussed.

Idol, Lorna, and J. Frederick West. "Consultation in Special Education (Part II): Training and Practice." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 20.8 (1987), pp. 474-94. The article analyzes the current practice of school consultation process.

Idol, Lorna. "A Rationale and Guidelines for Establishing Special Education Consultation Programs." *Remedial and Special Education* 9.6 (1988), pp. 48-58. Based on a set of recommendations approved by the National Task Force on School Consultation, this article presents a detailed rationale and guidelines for establishing special education consultation programs.

Idol, Lorna, P. Paolucci-Whitcomb, and A. Nevin. *Collaborative Consultation*. Rockville, MD: Aspen Systems, 1986.

Iowa State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education. *General Education Modifications for Students with Learning Disabilities, Grades 7-12: Project Report*. Des Moines, IA: Iowa State Department of Education, 1986. The report describes an Iowa project designed to identify reasonable accommodations for learning disabled students in regular secondary classrooms and to develop strategies for implementing classroom modifications. Survey results are reports. Project-recommended reasonable accommodations are then listed for each subject area.

Martens, Brian K., et al. "Teacher Perceptions of School-Based Interventions." *Exceptional Children* 53.3 (1986), pp. 213-223. A questionnaire assessed teacher perceptions of intervention alternatives used to control classroom behavior problems. Strategies rated as most effective, easiest to use, and most frequently used by both regular and special educators are described.

McKay, Bennie, and Jackie Sullivan. "Effective Collaboration: The Student Assistance Team Model." Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children. Toronto, Canada, April 1990. The paper describes the collaborative technique used by school-based teams of general and special educators to serve mainstreamed students and other unidentified "at-risk" students in the regular classroom. The SAT referral process has five steps: teacher requesting a consultation; teachers' concerns are prioritized; possible resolutions to the concerns are brainstormed; an intervention is designed; and a follow-up consultation in subsequently held. A form outlining procedures for conducting SAT meetings and an intervention plan form are appended.

Ossler, Anna C., et al. "School Prereferral Intervention Strategies for Students Experiencing Learning Problems." *Preventing School Failure* 34.2 (1990), pp. 23-31. The article describes 15 staff/student prereferral intervention strategies developed by teachers in Montgomery County (Maryland) for use with students having academic difficulties. Strategies are concerned with self-monitoring, metacognition, curriculum integration, simplifying English, study skills, home reading, and mentoring.

Osterweil, Zahava O. "A Structure Process of Problem Defining in School Consultation." *School Counselor* 34.5 (1987), pp. 345-352. Describes step-by-step procedure for the stage of problem clarification and identification for behavior consultant. Assumes that each problem may be defined in varied ways and that problem definition is not considered useful unless it is accepted as such by both the teacher (consultee) and the counselor (consultant).

- Pugach, Marleen C., and Lawrence J. Johnson. "Prereferral Interventions: Progress, Problems, and Challenges." *Exceptional Children* 56.3 (1989), pp. 217-226. The article examines assumptions associated with prereferral interventions of consultation and informal problem-solving teams with at-risk students. Critical analyses of the benefits and limitations of both the consultation and informal problem-solving team approaches are offered.
- Tindal, Gerald, et al. "Contextually Based School Consultation: Influential Variables." *Exceptional Children* 56.4 (1990), pp. 324-336. The triadic model of consultation service delivery for students is expanded to include a problem-solving approach including 11 variables within three domains: the people involved, their interactional process, and the implementation of specific procedures. The professional literature is reviewed within each domain.
- Volpiansky, Paula. "Implementing the Mainstreaming Curriculum: A Guide to Instructional Planning and Decision-Making." 1987. Unpublished manuscript; contact the Mainstream Curriculum Project, Watertown School District and Lake Mills School District, Wisconsin.
- Welch, Marshall, et al. "COOP: A Tool for Implementing Prereferral Consultation." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 22.2 (1990), pp 30-31. The article describes a one-page form ("Collaborative Options-Outcome Planner") to provide a format for prereferral consultation by special or regular educators. Designed to help educators in the self-questioning and problem-solving process.
- West J. Frederick. "Regular and Special Educators' Preferences for School-Based Consultation Models: A Statewide Study." Technical Report No. 101. Texas University: Department of Special Education, 1985. The study examined the preferences of 701 regular elementary teachers and 65 special education resource teachers for four school-based consultation models (collaborative, expert, medical, and mental health). Results suggested a strong preference by regular and special educators for a collaborative model for problem solving.
- West, J. Frederick, and Lorna Idol. "School Consultation (Part 1): An Interdisciplinary Perspective on Theory, Models, and Research." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 20.7 (1987), pp. 388-408. The paper questions whether the school consultation model which provides services to learning disabled students has a sound theoretical base. Included are an examination of 10 different models of consultation and their relationship to theory and a review of studies on facilitating the mainstreaming of learning disabled and other low-achieving students.
- Zvolensky, Carol, and Chris Speake. "Mainstreaming the Resource Specialist." In *Alternative Futures for Rural Special Education*. Proceedings of the Annual ACRES (American Council on Rural Special Education) National Rural Special Education Conference, 1988. The paper describes application of the collaborative/consultant model to the education of special needs students in the Mendocino Unified School District (California). Benefits of the model for students include reduction of stigma attached to labeling and pull-out, and for teachers, shared responsibility for instruction. At the elementary level, the student study team utilizes a team problem-solving approach. At the high school level, the highest priority of each faculty meeting is the discussion of students about whom teachers have concerns.



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